

# MINORA CARMINA

*C. C. R.*









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*TRIVIAL VERSES.*

BY

C. C. R.



London :

SWAN SONNENSCHN, LOWREY & CO.,  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1887.

LOAN STACK

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

*June 22nd, 1887.*

LONG to reign over us, God save  
The Queen ! Though many a loyal stave  
    Has by the nation's voice been sung,  
    Has from the nation's heart been wrung,  
The old words still sound good and brave.

They'll ring across the western wave,  
From eastern hills an echo crave,  
    To-day all Englishmen among—  
    God save the Queen !

Column and aisle and architrave,  
High mountain-top and deep sea-cave,  
    The chorus hear in many a tongue ;  
    From many a distant shore it's flung  
On waters that our island lave—  
    God save the Queen !

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IN THE LONDON SEASON.



## UP FOR THE SEASON.

“UP for the Season.” Ah me, what a magic,  
Small though the words, can be hidden therein !  
Ring up the curtain ! Or comic or tragic  
Be the *finale*, the play must begin.  
Pa may be surly, and swear that it’s early  
Comfort and covert-side both to forsake ;  
Ma, without warning, will whisper one morning  
News of a mansion she’s settled to take.

“Up for the Season.” The Duke and the Duchess  
Splendour must add to the general glare ;  
Brown, Smith, and Robinson also, (for such is  
Force of the fashion) are bound to be there.  
Credit with Gunter will cost you a hunter—  
Two it may be—ere the fall of the year ;

But a small matter the coin that we scatter,  
So in the papers our parties appear.

“Up for the Season.” A probable marriage,  
A certain flirtation, a scandal or two;  
A new coat of varnish adorning the carriage,  
A character that must be varnished anew;  
Some one you pet for a month, and regret for,  
Maybe, a week, or, it may be, for life:  
A “No,” that, one guesses, an ultimate “Yes” is—  
Somebody’s bolted with somebody’s wife.

“Up for the Season.” And see what a dash is  
Lady Dash cutting we deemed was cut down;—  
Phoenix-like rising from bankruptcy’s ashes,  
Well may we term her the talk of the town.  
Lordlings may lark it away to Newmarket,  
Ladyships leaving in London alone;  
Somebody’s visit—“Platonic”—Oh, is it?—  
Nothing can matter if nothing is known.

“Up for the Season.” But where are the Beauties  
Former years gathered from North and from  
South?

Blighted too early the bloom off the fruit is,  
Dried are the innocent dewes from the mouth.  
Some who have thriven, well-dressed and well-  
driven,

Pass in the Park with a carriage and pair;  
Others, who failed to win fortune, have sailed to  
India, Australia—does any one care?

“Up for the Season.” Why yonder’s a statesman  
Who, with yourself was at College or Hall!  
He was a Small’s man when you were a Great’s  
man;

Now he is great, and you feel that you’re small.  
Time turns the tables. Last year you were Mabel’s  
*First* love. She passes you now with a frown.  
This poem, you swear, is a medley, but where is  
Medley to equal “the Season” in town?

## RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS.

THEY left when leaves were falling  
In silence from the trees ;  
They come, Spring voices calling  
Them back across the seas.  
Released from wintry durance  
Each blossom sings a psalm,  
Glad in the sweet assurance  
Of future warmth and calm.  
Ring out, bluebells, and banner  
Your fronds each tender fern,  
To hail in heartsome manner  
Our swallows' safe return !

And they, unrestful swallows,  
While through our leafless wood

Shots pierced, and rang view-holloas.

Have in strange places stood—

Scaled pyramids ungainly—

And, scorning Arab guile,

Have face to face seen plainly

The serpent of Old Nile.

What stick the Mahdi drums with—

What pensions Pashas earn—

Of news the latest comes with

Our swallows' safe return.

Across the wide Campagna

They've led the Roman hunt :

Then sought in dull Romagna

Their worldly tastes to blunt.

What fashion, and whose fit, is

The proper thing to seek,

They learned in winter cities

Long, long ere Holy Week.

Spain's politics the state of—  
What fires in Etna burn—  
All known is at the date of  
Our swallows' safe return.

No doubt, gay social swallows,  
Where not the flight of bird,  
Nor of "Our Own," e'er follows,  
Your silken wings were heard.  
But let all rumour spare her,  
Her name no scandals taint,  
Who than the rest is fairer  
As lilies are than paint.  
See, swiftly borne, my belle come  
To arms for her that yearn!  
Smile, sky—laugh, waves—to welcome  
My swallow's safe return.



NUNC EST CÆNANDUM.

ALTHOUGH the season sadly  
May ope, in contrast grim  
With those when pleasure madly  
Whirled on the wings of Whim—  
Though sporting members sigh for  
The huntsman, hound, and horn,  
And invalids loud cry for  
Health-spots from which they're torn;  
Yet e'en to town detested  
Comes comfort in the line—  
“Your presence is requested”—  
You're going out to dine.

Though wars and warlike rumours  
Make dark the face of day,

And though my lady's humours  
Pen can't describe as gay—  
Though "Franciscans" are falling,  
And farms not few to let,  
And pamphlets quite appalling  
Have reached you from Thibet—  
This makes you double-breasted  
'Gainst home and foreign whine—  
"Your presence is requested"—  
You're going out to dine.

The list of "Last Night's Dinners"  
A "daily" column fills,  
To show that saints and sinners  
Have gone to work with wills.  
The blind, the deaf and dumb—what-  
E'er cause demands a dole—  
Find knives and forks are somewhat  
Good tools at taking toll.

Who deems that he's molested,  
Reading this note benign—  
"Your presence is requested"—  
You're going out to dine?

And when the draining beakers  
To each time-honoured toast—  
Yourself among the speakers—  
Has ceased to be a boast,  
Then notes pour in, suggestive  
Of cobwebs' '74—  
And meetings fond or festive,  
And that dear girl next door—  
Notes, monogramed and crested  
With multiform design,  
To say that you're "requested"  
To "just look in and dine."

## A LENTEN LECTURE.

SINCE we're told to shun excesses  
Smooth those mutineering tresses,  
Lay in lowest drawer the dresses

Where are many colours blent.  
Flowers we'd see on bosom chilly,  
None save saffron Lenten lily,

As your pious steps go by us, now it's Lent.

Sable robes, that fall sedately  
Round a figure full and stately,  
To its graces can add greatly,

Though in sign of sadness meant.  
By the care of skilful modiste,  
So the penitent is bodiced,

That ne'er's less work left to guesswork than in  
Lent.

Though the pastoral Grand Lama  
Opera ostracise and drama,  
The religious panorama

Feeds the eye to some extent:  
And, while music slow and solemn  
Floats o'er altar, arch, and column,  
Whispering passes, though, alas, is it not Lent?

Though the trois-temps be forbidden,  
Sweet to hear one's errors chidden  
By a Bradley, Lee, or Liddon,  
Or some *young* man eloquent.  
Then you need not fear you've lost your  
Figure's charm by kneeling posture—

Fair hands folded, arms well moulded, shown in  
Lent.

Though the fondest heart may weary  
Of the same old strain, and dreary  
"Tenebræ" and "Miserere"  
Folk confess in drawing-room pent,

Yet in cosy corner, then is  
Time to show him views of Venice—

“Bridge of Sighs,” and arch replies, and—O, it’s  
Lent!

Easter come, you’ll be obdurate  
To the Mario-voiced young curate,  
Whom you looked, O *so* demure at,  
Till those forty days were spent.  
Should he claim you gave him fairly  
Up your heart, you answer barely,

“No, I’m wiser. Canst deny, sir, it was Lent?”

## LONDON IN MAY.

My tastes are not urban—no Turk in his turban  
Loves better a softness o'erhead ;  
And my Lincoln and Bennett—I'm a grateful man  
when it  
Is changed for a fez, blue or red.  
In June I'm in clover as I sit and watch over  
The pangs of my rod-captured prey ;  
And later I'll hook me—I'll fly—where you book  
me,  
So you leave me my London in May

In summer's full glare it is hot—you can't bear it ;  
In autumn it's curtained by fogs ;  
In winter it's dreary—trees wan, women weary,  
The best of men gone to the dogs.

But on fair leaves and ladies as yet there no shade is  
To token their coming decay ;  
And each park and square's charming, with fresh-  
ness disarming  
All scoffers at London in May.

Not alone upon faces and foliage the grace is  
Of newness, not wholly gone by.  
Of new novels unprinted, new scandals unhinted  
Before, here's a copious supply ;  
New triumphs of pen or of pencil ; a tenor  
Untried ; and in French a French play.  
New cries, too, for linkboys—what you lose only  
think, boys,  
By losing a London in May.

So I sang and I reasoned, and every year seasoned  
At least for the last month of spring,  
Till May, Maytime's daughter, became mine, and  
wrought her  
Wiles o'er all I do and I sing.



---

"*Urbs tu Roma mihi*"—what matter if sky-high

We soar, dear, or sea-depths essay?

Form and fashion's quintessence are you, and your  
presence

E'er makes for me London in May.

## SWEET SEVENTEEN.

THIS year of grace is reached at last ;  
The giddy days of girlhood past,  
                  Those salad days so green,  
Louisa now is coming out.  
Young ladies know what they're about  
                  At Seventeen.

And if I prophesy my pet  
Will be the belle of all her set,  
                  Should envy step between,  
And point with a sarcastic eye  
To some who've bid a long "Good-bye"  
                  To Seventeen?

A land of promise is her world,  
Its glories only half unfurled ;  
                  With Hope to cast a sheen

O'er all the vistas opening  
This life appears a lovely thing  
For Seventeen.

No classic figure hewn of stone,  
A charm she hath that's all her own,  
Such charm as must have been  
Hers who unto the artist stood  
For Youth, in piquant cape and hood,  
Aged Seventeen.

And to the Ladies Joan and Jane,  
Her loving neighbours in the Lane,  
Her beauty's cause of spleen  
When followed by Lord That or This,  
They vow that she's a forward Miss,  
Miss Seventeen!

On either cheek she wears a rose,  
A set of pearls her lips enclose;—  
No pearls were ever seen

So sweetly framed as in her smile !

They 'll dub her in the Ladies' Mile

“Sweet Seventeen.”

GOING TO PROPOSE.

THERE is something in his air

To disclose

That he's going forth to dare

Future woes.

Half resigned and half despairing,

Sighing softly, softly swearing,

On his lonely way he's faring

To propose.

Winter's tempests haven't shed

Any snows

On that curly auburn head

Of our beau's ;

Yet his steps appear to falter,

As from swift to slow they alter,

Like the minstrel's whom Sir Walter  
To us shows.

On all men he glares as if  
They were foes ;  
Stops and sternly eyes his stiff  
Patent toes.

Though the way 's not long nor hilly  
From the Strand to Piccadilly,  
You would say it knocked him silly  
From his pose.

Though in poetry 'tis sweet  
To propose,  
Yet 'twould scarcely seem a treat  
Done in prose,  
If we judge by the forlorn—full  
Of foreboding, meek and mournful—  
Face of him we knew so scornful  
Of Fate's blows.

How his purpose to explain,  
                    How compose  
All the thoughts wherewith his brain  
                    Overflows,  
Now he ponders. Ah! those speeches,  
Mellow, soft, as ripest peaches,  
Will unlovely as owl's screeches  
                    Sound, he knows.

Number forty—forty-four,  
                    Very slow's  
He in coming to that door  
                    Of Miss Flo's:  
Counts the figures like a Cocker;  
Handles gingerly the knocker—  
Can it be he dreads to shock her  
                    In repose?

Though he'd placed a pound on each  
                    One of those

Steps, so might he never reach

The top rows,

Yet in hasty trepidation,

Just as if a poor relation

Were behind, on this occasion

Up he goes.

What's the cause of all these fierce

Mental throes

That his bosom rack and pierce,

D' you suppose?

Why, a winsome little fairy,

Who, in attitude unwary,

Shows a glimpse, 'neath laces airy,

Of silk hose!

Doffed her Lenten suit, in hue

Like a crow's,

She appears in fresh and new

Furbelows;



And above the frock's completeness—  
Negligence combined with neatness—  
Smiles a face, with bloom and sweetness  
Of a rose.

Now that face from throat to hair  
Brightly glows :  
Well she wots he's waiting there  
To propose.  
"Ayes" will have it, need we mention?  
Ne'er would feminine convention  
Throw out any man's intention  
By the "noes."

## WEDDING PRESENTS.

“X. Y. Z., ESQ., BANK NOTES.”

‘ONE more of them gone and got married’—

While, Lily! you’re left in the lurch!—

“And likely to be till I’m carried

In the coach with black horses to church.

And, see, to the list of her presents

The weekly a column devotes,

Where, brighter than crosses or crescents

Of jewels, are blazoned ‘Bank Notes.’

“Nor glory of rings and of brooches,

Nor sideboard consignment of plate

In value to paper approaches,

Computed as *per* present rate.

How it opens up vistas unended,  
Whereto fancy-wafted one floats,  
And ponders on purchases splendid  
To be made by the aid of 'Bank Notes'!

"More than one set of spoons my informer  
Records—that must surely be wrong?  
Doubtless he, who provides a spoon-warmer,  
Has found they get cold before long.  
Tune and time by piano and timepiece  
Oft are lost—oft are wrecked butter-boats;  
But she always has left a sublime piece  
Of furniture who has 'Bank Notes.'

"Old lace? The first time she shall wear it,  
Its fragile existence may end—  
A fancy-dress-ball partner tear it  
With his spur's rowel long past a 'mend'  
Bric-à-brac doesn't go far, I've heard, to  
Keep even a pony in oats:

By bank-people cheques are referred to—

You know—but all bow to ‘Bank Notes.’

“Bank Notes. And how many? Not stated.

An indefinite number, like x.

*There’s* a sum for the brain calculated

Of one of my curious sex.

Men may call it commercial in tone, or

Haw ‘Humbug!’ from husky old throats—

We girls give a hand to the donor

Who freely breaks out in ‘Bank Notes.’

“A big B and big N, as is proper

For initials that govern the land!

Birth, pedigree, rank, come a cropper,

With the ‘flimsies’ no longer to hand.

No treasure I grudge in her trousseau,

Whereon youthful womanhood dotes;

But I envy that girl—yes, I *do so*—

Those crispy and crumptious ‘Bank Notes.’”

COMMEMORATION AT OXFORD.

OF an ancient city taking stately holiday, and  
waking  
All its echoes, silence breaking in each cloister,  
court, and square ;  
Of smoothed wrinkles from each forehead, even of  
dons the most abhorrèd ;  
Of flirtations in the corridors devoted erst to  
prayer.  
Prayer forsooth's not done away with, but the  
liturgy they pray with,  
And the sort of things they say, without reserve  
would monks condemn.  
In compiling Oxford stories, what its lore is, what  
its glories,  
Write "page one of *Ars Armoris*" 'mid the  
memories of Commem.

Of youths gorgeous as to raiment, and regardless  
as to payment—

Sires will what's by "making hay" meant, "while  
their sons shine," learn ere long ;

Of those sires themselves, a bevy whom the  
"men" denote as heavy,

Grizzled warriors seen at Levy, parsons heard at  
Evensong,

Lawyers skilled at drawing cases, artists famed for  
drawing faces,

Men of race and men of races—honour's here,  
be sure, for *them*—

Here Q.C.'s and special pleaders, there M.P.'s and  
party leaders,

Yonder trade's financial feeders, 'mid the memories  
of Commem.

Hear them tell how they would lark it, ere life  
knew a care to cark it,

'Mid their meetings in the Market-place and  
greetings in "the Corn" ;

Or, at luncheon *chez* Chef Boffin, call to mind  
poor Tom, a toff in

Other days, now in his coffin 'neath the shade  
of Matterhorn ;

Dick, that demon with the women ; Hal, the fiz he  
used to swim in—

If there's something somewhat dim in those old  
eyes, shall we condemn

Hearts more soft than their profession, or yield  
sentiment concession

In this work of retrogression through the memo-  
ries of Commem ?

Those "Old Times" men have not wended hither-  
wards way unattended

By sweet girls, who now, as then did sweet  
ancestresses of theirs,

Raise degreeless minds aloft on wings of love,  
"men's" manners soften,

Nor permit whome'er they often meet to turn  
out utter bears.

'Neath the tall trees of St. Giles's he recipient of  
the smiles is

Of Cecilia, whom he'll style "Sis" ere his word-  
flow she can stem ;

By-and-by at the Masonic dance she'll dose him  
with a tonic,

Which will lend a tinge Byronic to his memories  
of Commem.

Of a richly decorated room wherein are congregated  
Friends and strangers, celebrated in the world's  
wide scroll of fame—

How we shout as an old crony, an ancient House-  
man or old Johnian,

Up the floor of the Sheldonian steps in answer  
to his name !

Of, remote from theatre crowded, walks by leafy  
branches shrouded,

Under skies,---or clear or clouded, mattered not  
to youthful phlegm,—



Rows down river—O the *sotto voce* talks at the  
Rock Grotto!—

“Kiss but never,” that’s the motto of these  
memories of Commem.

Of a Broad Walk where sedately treads a Sunday  
crowd, innately

Stamped with breeding’s seal, or lately risen a  
gilded rank to take;

Of soft music floating dreamily o’er skins and cos-  
tumes creamy,

Till the “men” forget life’s seamy side beside  
Vigornia’s lake;

Of old halls where Logic pauses from his terms,  
effects and causes,

Swept away by silks and gauzes, dazed by daz-  
ling gold and gem;

Of young vows at Oxford plighted, of young men  
in London slighted,

Of cigars with love-notes lighted, are the memo-  
ries of Commem.

## A LAY OF HENLEY.

A BREAK in the London season—a pause  
From step on the treadmill keeping ;  
From the Row and the rout and the roundabout—  
Seed sown for sorrowful reaping ;  
From the damning new plays with faintest of praise,  
And through old operas sleeping.

Pleasant it is by the river side  
In evening's cool to wander,  
When the long day's done, and the long odds won,  
And the siren's voice falls fonder,  
As she leads you, more bold than Ulysses of old,  
Riparian scenes to ponder.

Here a lilac bush, an acacia there,  
The river-bank still fringes ;

---

The white house, like a pale shy girl, 'neath a veil  
Of cedar boughs still cringes ;  
The sun, sinking low, with a golden glow,  
Trees, house, and the river still tinges.

The old boat's moored where it used to be,  
Half hid where the bushes are thicker—  
A queer-built craft, roomy fore and aft,  
The scorn of a Lowndes or a Dicker,  
It could bear us arights at eve, when the lights  
Would glance and the shadows flicker.

Does the boat still know the willow-bend  
Where it oftentimes was secreted?  
Or has it forgot that lone lovely spot  
Where two lone lovers were seated,  
And the old, old tale that never grows stale  
Was in old, old manner repeated?

From Henley town of unwonted life  
Would the sounds come o'er us stealing,

While from windows bright unwonted light  
Was the revel within revealing ;  
But light and sound came alike half-drowned  
Through the rifts of our emerald ceiling.

What was the wager we made one day  
On some one of next day's races?  
The coin at my chain, if she won, was her gain ;  
And mine, that sweetest of faces  
In a locket that hung from her neck among  
The secrets hid by her laces.

What was the wager I claimed next day,  
And called on my love to deliver?  
The heart-shaped gaud on the breast of Maud,  
With her each heart-throb that would quiver.  
From laces that float round her beautiful throat  
She frees it—it falls in the river.

When the river-world is so gay to-day  
At the saturnalia aquatic—

Time of music and muscle, of toilettes and tussle,  
And effects most truly dramatic

That the sudden rain, perchance, may explain—

Do you deem my fancies erratic,

That they wander away to the spot where my “lay”

Was made one eve of the races?

My coin was the cost of a heart that was lost

When won—not uncommon the case is.

I’ve now no coin for a girl to purloin ;

No golden heart’s under her laces.

## AT LORD'S.

So merry Junes a dozen,  
Have come, and passed away,  
Since you, my charming cousin,  
Would field for me all day!  
Can this tall lily by my side  
Be that wild elf who used to pride  
Herself upon her play?

.

No doubt I was a bully,  
As boys will be to girls—  
She now repays me fully  
With baronets and earls,  
Whose names trip lightly from her tongue,  
What time the sunbeams glint among  
Her wealth of golden curls.

.

She wears a light-blue bonnet—

She knows I'm Oxford mad—

Forget-me-nots upon it;—

A sight to make me sad,

For well I know that floral ware

Is meant to catch the eager stare

Of some young undergrad.

I try all scientific

Devices for defence;

My hitting's quite terrific,

My stopping too intense;

But she throws in a well-aimed smile,

And then I learn that all the while

My score does not commence.

At lunch with wine (d'you wonder?)

My throttle I anoint,

And make advances under

The cover of the joint;

But quick returns she throws me back,  
When pointed most in my attack,  
From cautious cover-point.

She knows about elevens—  
Is sure she could command  
Studd, Patterson, and Evans,  
And tell them where to stand.  
But this be sure—however straight  
She bowl you, you'll not meet your fate  
From doings underhand.

Well, mine were all the winnings  
Those dozen Junes ago.  
She now must have her innings,  
And I field out, I know.  
With none the pace for long can last :  
Her bowling's now extremely fast,  
And mine extremely slow.



What time at Hollow Thicket

We played beneath the trees,

I kept all day my wicket

Delightfully at ease.

Her prayers were met by answers cool:

'Tis I who fain would play the fool—

To-day—upon my knees.

## CHINA LIVES.

AN me ! if mortals only could  
(Which God forbid that mortals should !)  
Lead lives as purely free from all  
Defects as on the sombre wall  
Of yonder room, wherein are met  
The cream of the High Culture set,  
Blue china lives its blameless days,  
How sweet and comely were our ways !  
Our dainty hands we ne'er should soil  
With soul-degenerating toil,  
But mark in pity, calm, profound,  
The world that wags its weary round  
Pursuing bubbles—glory, pelf—  
We beings of ethereal delf.  
How chaste and smooth its aspect ! Such

A surface scandal ne'er could touch,  
Nor aught that lowers or pollutes.  
Beside it humankind are brutes,  
Even the best. But some there are  
(Behold them!) made of substance far  
More rarified than common clay,  
Born centuries before their day,  
Who, scorning things of earthenware,  
With bluest china might compare.

Sir Chingwell Chippendale could trace  
His birth to no ancestral race.  
(No matter what his father sold—  
Whate'er it was it turned to gold.  
A baronet the old man died,  
And rich—the world was satisfied.  
A monument's raised o'er his head,  
And now his son reigns in his stead.  
Young Chingwell was to Eton sent,  
And Granta all her graces lent

To make him what he fain would be—  
A scholar of the first degree  
In fashion—not in classic lore,  
Or mathematic—such a bore  
These trifles to a man who knew  
The shape and touch, the tint and hue  
Of each variety and class  
Of china that could ever pass  
Before the rapt collector's eyes,  
And what was worthless, what a prize.  
He scorned his comrades' coarse delight  
In chase of rat and terrier-fight,  
Nor understood what joys could yield  
The racecourse and the hunting field,  
While on his finer feelings jarred  
Examinations, cold and hard.  
Ere long the groves of Academe,  
Where china's not a favourite theme,  
Distasteful grew. His trophies rare  
Seemed to require a larger air.

Hence he and his collections came,  
Heralded by æsthetic fame,  
To town, where soon a *clientèle*  
Of ladies fair and students pale  
Pay court to Culture's newest friend,  
And nightly with his china blend.

Lady Valeria de Vaux,  
Good-looking as young ladies go,  
Sweet-mannered if she wished to please,  
Calm, lady-like, and at her ease,  
Highly connected (see Debrett),  
And moving in the choicest set,  
Some seven seasons now has seen,  
And scarce an offer has there been.  
She's played all parts. As *ingénue*  
She lisped of daisies and the dew,  
And cottages where roses twine, -  
And moonlit evenings on the Rhine.  
An ancient peer was then her aim,

But old Broadacres saw the game,  
And chuckled to himself, "My dear,  
The women of your house, I fear,  
Though all the men are doubtless brave,  
Are——" Leave such stories in their grave.  
She failed. When Croesus Crabtree's son  
Entered the Church—he had but one—  
Valeria joined the votive throng  
At Matins and at Evensong  
Who went to hang upon the tones  
Of one who half a million owns.  
But when he, sighing, said that he  
Upheld in priests celibacy,  
Religion, it must be confest,  
Completely lost its interest.  
So now that Higher Cult's unfurled  
Its glorious banner, and its world  
Has gladly hailed, though coming late,  
A Cambridge undergraduate  
With title, talents (so men said)

And wealth (his father's will she'd read),  
Valeria thought her course was clear.  
Failing the curate and the peer,  
She'd flutter upon wings of Art  
And China into Chingwell's heart.  
Her dress was changed and soon became  
A dress in nothing but the name ;  
Her hair assumed a disarray ;  
Her eyes seemed looking far away,  
Like one possessed by distant thought,  
Or in whom inspiration wrought.

To-night at Chingwell House her place  
Is near her host. On either face  
Is impress of the mind within,  
'That 'mid this fashionable din  
Holds commune with itself too deep  
In uttered language forth to leap.  
(Anxiety distracts his soul  
Lest Smith should break that sugar-bowl.

“Now will this ninny speak to-night?  
And will the settlements be right?”  
Such is her maiden reverie.)

Well, we shall see what we shall see.

The ball of converse rolls the while;  
Ranges from Ruskin to Carlyle;  
Treats of all subjects dreamed, or not,  
In all philosophy; and what  
Has puzzled sages many a year  
Is made to seem quite simple here.

*De rebus omnibus*, I wis,

*Et de quibusdam aliis*,

Boldly the fairest lips discuss.

Just listen now to gold-haired Gus,  
Who's captured there a new recruit,  
The Indian hero, Colonel Loot.

“Been long returned? You've heard, of course,  
In France they're now to have divorce.

The next election's not in doubt;



The Government will *not* go out.  
The statesman of the future's there  
With the ambrosial beard and hair.  
I have no time for skating. Yes,  
Sir Chingwell's house *is* a success,  
A perfect masterpiece. He owns  
To some suggestions from Burne-Jones.

The pictures? Really something grand.  
All day the uninspired may stand  
In front of them and cannot see  
Whatever they're supposed to be.  
The very mat on which you wipe  
Your feet's the real Morrissian type.  
There's Paul, the poet—such a pet—  
Oh! no, he is not published yet.  
The fierce outpourings of his pen  
Are food too strong for common men,  
But cherished by the faithful few  
With eyes to read the great and true.

China—oh ! had I but my will  
I'd spread it o'er each house until  
No room for aught beside was left.  
I'd die of my blue cups bereft."

So on—and on—the topics pass  
From politics to Venice glass ;  
Young girls just out of Girton's gate  
Sagely on social problems prate ;  
But Grandmamma with wondering eyes  
Looks on in spectacled surprise,  
Recalls her own far different youth,  
When all she heard she deemed was truth,  
And amidst all these sceptics' zest  
Thinks that the old days were the best.  
Old customs mayn't be void of ill,  
But with their faults we love them still,  
Like England's self. And maybe, more  
True womanhood in dames of yore,  
True manhood in the men who knew

---

Nothing about these bits of "blue,"  
Was found, than in this Cultured race  
Of touzled hair and faded face,  
Who 'twixt themselves and china see  
Some undefined affinity,  
And, like that on which they bestow  
Such care, are less for use than show.

## SOUVENIRS OF THE SEASON.

UPON the table they lie scattered there.

Worth packing—what? A painted Watteau fan  
I held, nor would return, for with a man  
She'd danced I liked not. Lock of auburn hair  
She cut, because, she said, she well could spare  
Of what she had too much. Longer I scan  
A faded rose; for, if construe one can  
Language unspoke, when to her bosom's bare  
Firm polished surface first she pressed it—so,  
Then warmed its redness at her red lips' glow,  
Then at my feet the twice-blessed treasure cast,  
While fluttering laces proved her heart beat fast,  
She more revealed than she would have me know  
In one sweet souvenir of the season past.

A fan, a curl, a flower. With these compare,  
Heaped in one ruin, every cherished plan,  
Of former friends a disaffected clan,  
Some streets of wrinkles where the ground was fair,  
Some miles of unpaid bills, a load of care,  
A bank-book closed that but last May began,  
A tooth-mark left me by her black-and-tan ;  
And then the balance of the scales declare—  
Stay ! on my lady's side one item throw :  
A card's here for her wedding. Shall I go,  
And earn the breakfast that may be my last,  
Before I face the fierce winds' angry blast,  
Steaming Boulogne-wards, where sad exiles show  
Souvenirs like these of many a season past?



IN THE COUNTRY-HOUSE  
SEASON.





## IN TIME OF NUTTING.

WIDOW she of some years' standing,  
Bachelor well-balanced I,  
Here we've met upon the landing,  
But—no, not upon the sly.  
Mid-October ; merry voices  
Of young nutters reach our ears,  
As the noon in smiles rejoices,  
Though the dawn was one of tears.  
So when youth's been 'whelmed in sorrow,  
Weeping maid or boy  
From maturer life may borrow  
Compensating joy.

Very buxom now the dame is ;  
Very beautiful withal,

And her eyes' soft glance the same is  
Once that held me in its thrall;  
When the smiler's waist was slimmer,  
And no angler half so smart  
'Threw the fly and set the trimmer  
For that dainty fish—a heart;  
When a youth came hither strutting,  
Lavish of self-praise,  
And the twain went out a-nutting  
In the dear old days.

Very witty then that youth was  
(Is she laughing in her sleeve?  
Very scornful she, good sooth, was  
Of his wit, one may conceive);  
Classic, too, with his *nux*, *nucis*,  
And quotation Oxford-bred,  
Of the couplet where the uses  
Of the nut are trebly\* read:

\* *Nux vigilat, recreat, nutrit, etc.*

And he'd cite, so very callow's  
Oft the undergrad,  
Nut-lore gathered from "All Hallows'  
Eve" to make her sad.

Strange that scene should come back clearly  
As we stand together now ;  
Twenty years since then, or nearly,  
Have been laid upon my brow.  
Strange that I should find this morning  
In this journal, dimmed with age,  
Record of a woman's scorning,  
Record of a lover's rage.  
Strange an old newspaper cutting  
Memories should raise  
Of the jocund time of nutting  
In the dear old days.

Here—October twenty-second—

"Violet Home to Viscount Hurst ;"

There—not later much, I've reckoned—

“Ensign—Someone—to the First.”

While she whirled across the Border,

Ladyship a week or so,

We for India'd had our order,

And were steaming Eastward ho!

Did I mourn, maybe, the college

Left in angry haste?

Did she find the fruit of knowledge

Bitter to the taste?

Well, what matter? Bronzed and grizzled

If I be, and staid in air;

If the snows of time have drizzled

Landmarks on her raven hair;

If we passed a fierce ordeal

Ere from dross we sorted gold,

Ere we knew the false from real;

Still, we're not—so *very* old.

Love, your hand—the blind is shutting  
    Out intruders' gaze—  
So once more in time of nutting  
    Come the dear old days!

A BOX OF GROUSE.

No, I haven't cut the strings yet—

Time I did.

Proof that Scotland has good things yet

Here lies hid.

Swift it's sped across the Border,

All its passage deftly planned ;

Pleasure did those cards afford her,

Written in so clear a hand,

Since she's honoured thus my order

On demand.

For, when first the northward journey

Was explained,

Here by counsel and attorney

I was chained.

But I wrote that fair enslaver  
Of my soul that, though I spurned  
Thought of asking gift or favour—  
As, no doubt, ere now she 'd learned—  
Grouse for me'd not lose the flavour  
Once discerned.

Here it stands, like many another  
Southward flown,  
Winged by comrade, cousin, brother,  
To the lone  
Left-behind ones. But what fever  
Turns me hot and turns me pale?  
Ne'er before was I receiver  
Of a parcel sent by rail?  
Did—O, did my heart believe her  
Hand would fail?

Would not tie the strings securely,  
Or paint right

This address (she knows it surely !)

Black and white ?

Would not indicate the staircase

(Here they're all so much the same) ?

Would not (I suppose a bare case)

Add initials to my name,

Giving homonyms a fair case

For a claim ?

Well, it's here, and can recall me

Yonder lodge,

Cramped, but which could ever stall me

By some dodge

Of the fay, to whom confided

Was our *ménage*, high and low ;

And whose genius, many-sided,

Made all things so smoothly flow ;

Sweetness, light, where'er she glided,

Seemed to grow.



Each man, at the crag that bounded  
Her outlook,  
Paused, before the point he rounded ;  
Kerchief shook ;  
'Gainst the stone face, old as story,  
Of the lodge, saw, brightly fair,  
Of her face the damask glory—  
Age and youth were imaged there,  
While the lichens, dark and hoary,  
Foiled her hair.

When at eve they laid the dead out,  
Did she choose  
This one from the plunder spread out,  
That refuse—  
Pick the plumper and rotunder,  
Wide of girth and broad of breast,  
For her bird in town, I wonder,  
Helping him before the rest,

Who—although we're miles asunder—  
Still's her guest?

Cut the strings. Beneath the cover,  
See, here lies  
Her dear pasteboard, to a lover  
Such a prize!

Sweet as marmalade of Keiller  
Are the words you mustn't guess—  
Sweet as kiss young love can steal, or—  
Eh? It's only an address?  
“Peters, Poulterer and Game-dealer,  
Inverness.”

## LA CHASSERESSE.

COMETH the season we all of us long for,  
Season beloved of the sons of the gun,  
Bracing our muscles, and making us strong for  
Fits of flirtation and feasting and fun !  
With it from seaside—it may be to Dee-side,  
Thames-side, or Humber-side, any address  
Where she's invited—delighting, delighted,  
Cometh, and charmeth, the gay Chasseresse !

She, like yourself, makes a pleasure of trouble,  
If it conduces to slaughter of game ;  
She in the boudoir, you over the stubble,  
Gallop a hobby that's one and the same.  
Time, wind, and weather, of fur and of feather,  
Alter your mode of pursuit ; and no less

She, by the changes of season, arranges

Choice of her weapons, the gay Chasseresse !

So, on a surly-eyed morning of winter,

See her give spur to her spirited mare ;

Perfect's the habit that does more than hint her

Perfect proportions—the neatest of wear.

He—her attendant, in scarlet resplendent—

Offers “a lead” ; but you'll hear him confess

'Neath the aroma of weeds, he came home a

Mile to the rear of the gay Chasseresse.

Springtime her Londonward way bids her take, with

Sporting aspirants to fashion and fame :

Many the centre she's certain to make with

Arrowy glances so certain of aim.

Nokes through her glasses is shot as he passes

Under her box ; at a lunch of their mess,

Stokes has to sit by her side, and is hit by

Drumsticks he carves for the gay Chasseresse.

Soon at the Isle the sea-maiden, sea-mummer,  
Loathe her with venom or load her with vows;  
Butchery's been in no previous summer  
Seen to compare with her killing of Cows.  
There a "tea-kettle" steam-yacht has its metal  
Put by her mettlesome ways to a stress;  
Nosed aquilinely, the skipper is finely  
Snubbed by a cut from the gay Chasseresse.

Now mellow autumn is here, country houses  
Crowded, and echoes alive on the hill,  
Charming in choicest of gaiters and blouses,  
Ha, merry gentlemen, she's with you still!  
Miniature weapon in hand, could she step on  
Canvas, 'twere picture you'd die to possess;  
Surely Diana her snip sent to plan a  
*Costume de chasse* for the gay Chasseresse.

All the year round for her sport is the proper  
Season, and plentiful ever her prey.

Like Atalanta she's fast : you can stop her

Only by dropping your gold in her way.

Some who depart whole in body, and heart-whole,

Find themselves winged by a flying caress ;

*Forsan lassata, nondum satiata,*

Still on the track is the gay Chasseresse.

A DAY'S PHEASANT SHOOTING.

THE SPOT.

ALL summer long the ancient place  
In somnolence reposes,  
Regarding with half-sleepy face  
The summer's wealth of roses ;  
But when the woods, no longer vain,  
Assume a garment sober,  
And in a slowly-falling rain  
Sad leaves descend, the place again  
Is wakeful in October.

THE PARTY.

The Squire, a fossil tough and dry,  
In all things orthodox is,  
And sees that coverts *can* supply  
Pheasants as well as foxes.

The Captain's home from shooting grouse,  
To rearrange the stable;  
And Gus, the *gourmet* of "the House,"  
Devotes his academic *nous*  
To matters of the table.

Staid Hetty's here—her husband still  
Is stationed off Ragusa;  
Miss Gorgon's after Gus—now will  
That Perseus spare Medusa?  
Our madcap Mignonne has in tow  
The Major, man of inches:  
A hunt that travels somewhat slow—  
No cash on either side, you know,  
Is where the slipper pinches.

#### THE SPORT.

On punctual hours the Squire is firm—  
No breakfasting by batches—



The early bird that's caught the worm

The early cartridge catches.

If battues here supply no "stuff"

To galvanise the gapers,

Feather and fur are found enough

By men who shoot upon the rough

For sport, and not for papers.

The witching hour of half-past one

Brings luncheon and the ladies,

With science set, where, from the sun

And wind, a welcome shade is.

Ah me, that Paris-sent costume

For walking o'er the stubble!

Ah me, those tresses' faint perfume!

Cock-pheasants well may airs assume;

We've ceased to give them trouble.

#### THE FINISH.

An English dinner, snug and slow

A sporting chat to follow,

When every man extends his bow,  
    Outrivalling Apollo.  
And when the clocks are sounding twelves,  
    A genuine elixir  
Transports the punch-bowls from the shelves,  
Whereout to drink the Queen, ourselves,  
    And eke the manly mixer.

THE EVE OF THE FIRST.

“You may call me to-morrow as soon as you  
please,

And be sure that the horses aren't late ;  
See the breeches are cleaned, and the boots off the  
trees,

And that breakfast is ready by eight !”  
One day in the year, be it cloudless and clear,  
Or with weather at wildest and worst,  
The sportsman must go to take part in the show  
That's sacred to him on the First.

Yes, that's the old horse—how he neighs in his  
stall !

No doubt he has wind of the fun,  
For the men in the yard he has heard, one and all,  
Discussing the chance of a run.

His figure was stiff, but there isn't an "If"  
About him. Of cash you've disbursed  
It's little you reck when you lead at a check  
With the Hunt all behind on the First.

Of what could we talk on an evening like this?  
My Lord, as he lolls at the Club,  
In the boudoir at tea-time the hard-riding miss,  
And Jack who drinks beer at his "pub";  
All have something to tell of a horse they've to  
sell—

An old one they've carefully nursed,  
Or a young one they've tried, that will take down  
the pride  
Of all who go out on the First.

For days, every man that you passed on the road—  
The farmer when marketwards bound,  
The Squire when his newly-bought nag he bestrode,  
The labourer tilling the ground—

Not one but would say, in a pleased sort of way,  
Even ere the bad markets were cursed,  
As though 'twere a treat just the words to repeat,  
“We shall see you, of course, on the First.”

As you watch the blue smoke curling lazily up  
From your weed, or your meerschaum, or clay,  
With your hand resting lightly upon the tall cup,  
And your pal sitting over the way,  
Who (severely, it's true) says, “The bottle's with  
you,”  
You pause, ere you slaken your thirst,  
To draw in your breath, and swear nothing but  
death  
Will keep you at home on the First.

And the smoke, as it curls, is assuming a shape—  
The shape of a muster of hounds,  
Of horses, and horsemen. The curtains that drape  
The windows are woodlands, and sounds

Come loud and come clear that are known to your  
ear—

A splash ! and a horseman 's immersed  
In a deep, muddy ditch. You can see the youth  
pitch

On his head. It 's yourself, on the First.

The First ! A long lane, well protected with trees,  
A man who looks flurried and hot,  
A fairy-like maid who is riding at ease,  
And trying to seem (what she 's not)  
Alarmed, as she turns a fair cheek that scarce  
burns

From the question—to ask it who durst?  
Why, the man is yourself. Do you still love the  
elf

Who told you *you* were not “the First”?

\* \* \* \* \*

---

*Ay de mi!* When the years cluster thick, and the  
hair

Clusters thin on the top of the pate,  
And the brows are all furrowed and wrinkled with  
care,

These visions of sport are too late.  
We'll raise a thin shout to the men who are out,  
And then have a glorious burst  
The length of the street (where alone we are  
"Fleet"),  
And a kill in the Strand on the First.

### KIRBY GATE.

Quum positis novus exuviis nitidusque juvena est *Venator*.

Now we've laid aside the humble  
 "Ditto" suits, wherein to tumble  
 Or stick on, and shout or grumble,  
 When cub-hunting, 'twas our fate,  
 We may sport more sporting vesture ;—  
 For to do and don your best you're  
 Bound when this command is given — "Kirby  
 Gate."

"Oh ! new splendour"—Oh ! the study  
 Lavished on that garment ruddy,  
 And on boots that "somewhat muddy"  
 Must confess their normal state—



While the neatest of all bows is  
That which 'neath the knee reposes  
Of the customer got up for Kirby Gate.

Whosoe'er 'twas perpetrated  
That old libel, where 'tis stated  
Days Novembrian are ill-fated,  
In his breast were lies innate.  
For a fact, a man may swear to,  
Is—no Englishman would care to  
Cut his throat the month we meet at Kirby Gate.

But we miss each year old faces—  
Hers, the mistress of all graces,  
His, the first at dangerous places—  
Comrades of no distant date :  
And we see—nor scorn confession—  
Phantom forms in the procession  
As it files to Gartree Hill from Kirby Gate.

Old times here we must be curt on,  
And new horses try a spurt on,  
For away upon the Burton  
    Side's a fox that will not wait;  
And the fences big and blind as  
Solid walls of green you find, as  
You sit down to make the pace from Kirby Gate.

From afar we con with fancy's  
Eye that field of varied chances,  
That most moving of romances  
    Which can ne'er its students sate:—  
Here's the once more proven clinker,  
There to collar-work and blinker  
One condemned that's failed to "pass" at Kirby  
    Gate.

Pass the bottle. Many a thirst-time,  
Since we saw those hounds the first time,

---

Have we known—and, “At the worst I’m  
Sinking at the usual rate,”  
Each can say with round him steely  
Eyes grown dim, and wrinkles freely  
Marking brows that once were smooth at Kirby  
Gate.

Many an ancient will remember,  
Seated by the glowing ember,  
The first Monday in November ;  
Many a veteran will relate,  
While they brew his evening mixture,  
Tales of that time-honoured fixture,  
And the doings of the Quorn from Kirby Gate.

## OUR CHRISTMAS HOUSE-PARTY.

BACK here in chambers, dim and dusty,  
Amid pipes and papers, and pens and ink,  
And dog's-eared editions and parchments musty,  
I'll sit by the fire, and dream and think,—  
Think of the house with the many gables,  
Red-bricked and with ivy half o'er-grown,  
Where cellar and pantry, and coverts and stables  
Were free to all comers as if their own—  
Dream of the days that sped so sweetly,  
Like love-songs measured to noble rhyme ;  
Of the girl who entranced my soul completely  
And our gay house-party at Christmas-time.

That stately house is a painter's study  
Of calm repose with its antique air ;—

Its smiling face so broad and ruddy,  
Like the face of him who is master there.  
Our white-haired host—how his words of welcome  
On the ear would fully and richly strike !  
Let the London scribe, or the county belle, come,  
The hearty greeting's for all alike.  
"No books I hope, sir, in yon portmanteau ?  
On Puck, not Pegasus, you've to climb ;  
And a canter's healthier work than a canto  
For warming the blood at Christmas-time."

Miss Maud had scarcely a glance for the rhymers  
In town who ventured a song to send.  
(I drink her health in this clear Hockheimer,  
And wish her all one may wish,—a friend.)  
Her neck and brow more white than the lilies ;  
Her lips like a red, red rose's core  
Smile till each man to her own sweet will is  
A slave for once and for evermore.

And he vows 'neath her gaze to be a performer,  
With gun, or in saddle, of feats sublime ;  
And perhaps her heart beats a little warmer  
Than it did in town, at this Christmas-time.

We've joys that in memory must outlast yours  
Who strive alone for political prize :  
Gallops over the lush December pastures  
Beneath the soft December skies,  
Some fun in the coverts among the pheasants,  
Some strolls with the ladies along the lanes ;  
The Christmas tree and the Christmas presents,  
The pool or rubber, the losses or gains.  
And, after the short-lived daylight's closing,  
The song or dance till the small hours chime ;  
Can I live twelve months, in the hope reposing  
Of another such party next Christmas-time?

OUR COUNTY BALL.

OUTSIDERS see most of the game.

Old fellow, we'll stand here and look on ;  
Though, doubtless, you find rather tame  
An affair that you can't have a book on.  
Yet here by a numerous field  
Are prizes and places disputed,  
That to layers and backers might yield  
A market where all should be suited.

Here, before put in training for brides,  
Led out are the fillies of fashion ;  
And often the form here decides  
If a town course they're fit for a dash on.  
Some bear them as scorning a lead,  
Some seem to hang back and to falter :

But "the office" how few really need  
On a track where the post is the altar!

The prizes are ranged round the room;  
The candidates peer at them shyly,  
And pick and appraise those in whom  
Are essentials they value most highly.  
Courage, talent, fidelity? Nay,  
These are not reckoned worthy the winning.  
See the favourite coming this way!  
No workwoman, sir, but she's spinning.

Her glances are lavishly shed.  
Here a smile she will grant, there a favour,  
Here a hand-shake, there nod of the head—  
Now *what* from mistakes is to save her?  
Of her lovers she reads 'twixt the lines :  
On a bald crown a coronet places,  
Or sees the gold ore hid in mines  
Beneath most unpromising faces.



Here penalties some have incurred,  
Who for make and shape victory merit;—  
Beauty's daughters may such to the third  
And fourth generation inherit.  
And some for some former affairs  
Society's system has weighted—  
Best chance in a maiden race theirs  
Who allowances take unabated.

But not to the young ones alone  
The interest's confined of the meeting,  
Although they're a lot, you will own,  
Would take in Belgravia some beating  
Certain townsmen will make it a near  
Thing, before the festivity ceases,  
For first word in his Grace's sound ear  
On agreements and granting of leases.

You'll perceive at the room's lower end  
Local ladies, the doctors' and lawyers'

Each straining to outstrip her friend  
In winning nods from the top-sawyers.  
Every dance joy, or jealousy, strong  
In bosoms maternal arouses,  
As their daughters are left, or along  
Are whirled by guests from the great houses.

'Tis only a county-town ball,  
Where many a butt for your wit is ;  
Yet here is epitomised all  
The society life of great cities.  
The "Quidquid agunt homines,  
Votum, timor, ira, voluptas,"  
Your philosopher studies at ease,  
And goes home when he decently supped has.

## THE STUDENT'S VALENTINE.

LIKE some white fluttering feather,

It on his table fell ;—

What 'twas I doubt me whether

That bookish man could tell.

On shoulders perched of Liddell,

It hid the face of Scott :

He ne'er had met such riddle

In volumes polyglot.

But as to sphinx Egyptian

Point arrow-headed signs,

So here of an inscription

He reads between the lines.

Each dot above the "i's" is,

Each curly-tailèd "Q,"

An index that he prizes  
To show who sent it—who?

“A simple Northern lassie—  
But, then, her eyes are bright;  
Her locks are gold and massy;  
Her step is true and light;  
Her face sweet fun is full of,  
Beneath her rustic toque;  
And few can get the pull of  
Her tongue at equivoque.

“Eyes bent demurely downwards,  
Her way at eve she takes  
By shortest cut that townwards  
The bleak moorside forsakes.  
Rough winds begin to hurtle,  
As steps she 'cross the heath,  
And lift her scarlet kirtle  
To show the shoon beneath.

“Scarce dares she at the counter  
For ‘Valentines’ to ask ;  
And maiden blushes mount her  
Cheeks, bending o’er her task.  
She fixes, then refuses—  
She takes up and lays down—  
Till *this* at last she chooses  
For Quills in Cambridge town.”

While thus the student sketches  
His fancy-picture, smiles  
From friends around he fetches  
Who load his shelf in piles.  
What time his bow Apollo  
Unstrings, old Homer nods,  
And peals of laughter follow  
From all the classic gods.

He guesses not—the dullard!—  
The Saint this morning shed

That thing of lace and coloured

Foil on a lady's bed.

It flew there with its brothers,

A shower of valentines—

She greeting has for others,

But this one she declines.

“No ring, no brooch, no bracelet !

What can the fellow think ?

'Twill suit old Soberface—let

Me have my pen and ink.

There—‘Quilsby Quirk, Coll : Downing ;

How pleased the fool will be,

And smooth his forehead's frowning,

And dream—once more—of me !”

That simple Northern lassie

He sketched in college-rooms—

Her eyes are somewhat glassy,

Her lips have lost their blooms.

Moorside for Piccadilly

She's changed—the rest one knows—  
And now she paints the lily,  
And has to buy the rose.

Yet not a mission wasted

That valentine's we deem;—  
Through it a lone heart tasted  
Love's sweets if in a dream.

His lips devoutly kiss it;

A moisture dews his eyes:—  
Where ignorance is bliss, it  
Is folly to be wise.

JACK THE RUNNER.

YES, sir, none can say you're wrong;

Here they call me "Jack the Runner"—  
Jack, who's good for glass or song,  
And at keeping all day long  
With the hounds confessed a "oner."

True, sir, it may be I might

Find more orthodox employment—  
That's the term—from early light  
Toil—go weary home at night—  
And know nothing of enjoyment.

But, you see, I wasn't bred

For a life of hum-drum labour—



Gipsy days my mother led,  
And my father fought and bled  
    Wearing a light horseman's sabre.  
Far back as the record goes—  
    Oh! we've pedigrees, we yeomen—  
Ancestors of mine it shows  
Drinking deep and dealing blows  
    Where they flagons found or foemen.

I, too, dreamed of soldier's fame—  
    I, too, took the Royal shilling—  
In my battery bore a name  
That no farmer's son would shame—  
    Till the pace became too killing.

Canteen-keeper had a niece—  
    I was not the first one blinded  
By your eyes, Miss Beatrice—  
Women all are of a piece;  
    Others have behaved as mine did.

She'd not with a sodger mate ;  
    So the service lost a gunner.  
Then, of course, she swore she'd wait ;  
Then I heard—but all too late :  
    So I'm only "Jack the Runner."

No, sir, I've no call to curse—  
    Tips and tippie both are plenty.  
Better men are faring worse—  
William dying—so the nurse  
    Told me—and he's barely twenty.

Mostly I've by night a roof ;  
    And by day, when of their metal  
Hounds are giving staunchest proof,  
Chaps who've got to pad the hoof,  
    Need to be in fairish fettle.

Often I've a quiet sneer  
    At the swells who'd over-ride me.

Life has taught me very clear,  
That if I'd a nag to steer,  
Care'd find room to sit beside me.

Think'st at covert-side to-day  
There's a cheerier heart than this is,  
Rugged, horny-palmed, and grey  
Though the wearer of it? Nay!  
Search among the men and misses.

Women first. See, envy stirs  
Lady Di to eat her heart out,  
For she knows that mare of hers  
Ain't a patch on Mrs. Spur's;—  
But she'll have to play her part out.

Here's the town contingent, who'll  
Spoil his gallop for the Master;—  
Well he knows that gaudy school  
Holds a heavy-handed fool  
Like to cause the hounds disaster.

Farmer wants to sell a horse—

Doctor's looking out for cases—

“Chief” is thinking of “the force”—

Captain wondering will the course

Suit his ventures at the races.

Mine's a mind unfettered—mine

Fragrance of the southern breezes—

Eyes of pretty girls that shine—

Sweet dog-music—I repine

Only when it snows or freezes.

Same to me 'tis, if the sky

Lighter be of hue or dunner;

If the beauties dwell or fly,

Still I'm with them, smart and spry—

So they call me “Jack the Runner.”

AFTER THE WINTER SEASON.

FAREWELL, all ye sylvan beauties,  
Unto whom I've paid my duties  
In this dreary little township you call Wooton-in-  
the-Wold ;  
You, with whom I've oft been skating,  
Though the pastime sorely hating,  
But a man had need do something to keep out  
the bitter cold ;—  
True I have not loved you blindly,  
But I bid you "Good-bye" kindly,  
And I leave without reluctance your temptation-  
guarded fold.

With your chaperons frowning gravely,  
There were some of you went bravely  
Whether flood or floor or fallow were the course  
you speeded o'er ;

On her skates was Kitty fearless,  
In the ball-room Bessie peerless,  
And Miss Pussie in the saddle had us pounded by  
the score.

Say, does my departure grieve you?  
Ah! I cannot weep to leave you,  
Though it seems exceeding likely I shall never meet  
you more.

Stern old Time, as he advances,  
Stops the hunting and the dances  
For the cosy ingle-corner and the cordial beef-tea.  
Shades of Phyllis and of Chloe,  
Locks of ebon, bosoms snowy,  
Nothing is there now in common 'twixt your comely  
selves and me!

Though a stud be recommended  
Up at Tatt's as something splendid,  
'Twill not tempt the wily veteran to run up to  
town and see.

I can still enjoy a gallop,  
Or a sail in roomy shallop,  
And, like Walter Savage Landor, "I write verses  
now and then ;"  
To old form I try to race up,  
But I cannot keep the pace up,  
Like the heroes that I read of, unto threescore  
years and ten.  
So I pray you let me lightly  
Down Lethean streams, and rightly  
Set me *inter seniores*, or among the elder men.





MISCELLANEOUS VERSES.

PART I.



## CHRISTMAS GHOSTS.

ERE the mellow lamps are lighted, with my past  
a while united,

Here I sit ;

While from out the ruddy embers ghosts of many  
gone Decembers

Round me flit.

Each one, not in sadness solely, nor with joy sur-  
rounded wholly,

Comes and goes ;

And for me this Christmas nightshade's set in  
flowers of dark and bright shades,

Rue and rose.

Towards yon grey old church's steeple toil the  
thick-soled country people

Up the hill ;

Save for bells that ring a merry peal of pæans, all  
is very

Calm and still.

With the rest, assembling thereat, seem to play a  
childish pair at

Groom and bride.

*He* is nervous, and, at most, lets her his hand  
touch—tiny ghostlets

Side by side.

In a curtained room, and shuttered, heads are  
bent and words are muttered

O'er a book ;

Nor is dose of social senna feared from faithful old  
duenna,

Who won't look.

What's writ in those ghostly chapters, that his  
fingers thus have trapped hers?

By what spells

With the Christmas chimes are blended notes of  
silver-tongued and splendid

Marriage-bells ?

Faded tapestry, fresh faces, ancient portraits, modern  
graces—

An array

Brought together by the golden links of love and  
custom olden

For the day.

Ghosts, of course. But very human seems that  
spirit playing Schumann ;

Not so loud

She can't hear words, like caresses, dropped by  
one, one other—blesses—

In the crowd.

Where the sheer side of the hill is strewn with  
snow as if with lilies,

While beneath

Oft is flung, by crested surges that ne'er cease  
their solemn dirges,

A foam-wreath,

There, a place of mournful fitness, stand a ghostly  
few to witness

Last rites paid

Unto one who 'd breathed a wish her home should  
with these humble fisher

Folk be made.

We, who once her love contested, hid our worst  
where we our best hid—

In that grave ;

Brotherhood in grief had kinned us. Sleeps he  
now 'neath sands the Indus'

Waters lave.

Cypress with our Christmas hollies twines, and for  
past faults and follies

We've to pay.

---

But all ghosts of spite and hatred, of them finally,  
though late, rid,

Let us lay.

## THROUGH THE MEADOWS.

IN the meadows in the Maytime,  
In the golden Summer's gay time,  
In the silver Autumn's grey time,  
In the time of Winter's snow—  
Through long months you must remember,  
January to December,  
How we wandered, talked, and pondered, long  
ago !

In the meadows New Year's morning,  
Chilly winds of Winter scorning,  
Where the huntsman's cry gave warning  
That the hounds had gone, you 'd go—  
You, the reckless lady rider,  
I, the cavalier beside her,  
Whom she meets with, and defeats with, "No,  
sir ; no."



---

In the meadows when the early  
Morns of Spring beheld the pearly  
Dew-drops glisten, and when curly  
Locks would in confusion flow,  
How we heard the song-bird's matin  
From the hammock which we sat in,  
You a bonny lass, I "Johnny," and your beau !

In the meadows, amber-flooded  
By the July sun, and studded  
With wild flowers that bloomed and budded,  
Scorning aid that men bestow—  
How the lover whom you 'd cheated  
Asked and asked the oft-repeated  
Question, "Will you, dear?" and still you  
answered, "No."

In the meadows Autumn leaves are  
Falling, garnered all the sheaves are,

And his hopes, as one believes, are  
Into nothingness to grow—  
When, from rosy lips, unbidden,  
Comes a word that, though half-hidden  
By caresses, clearly “Yes” is—can’t be “No.”

## ART STUDENTS.

SWEET, kindly lives which pleasant memories waken  
Even in one, no brother to the guild ;  
Firm, friendly hands which mine have often taken,  
Nor time nor space our friendship yet hath killed !

And from the South I welcome aye the message  
Breathing success, and telling triumphs won ;—  
How this, or that, old friend's fulfilled the presage  
Of his bright youth, and proved Art's worthy son.

How one has wooed fame with a "Kiss of Glory" ;  
One spent his fancy on a woodland elf ;  
One dared a step beyond Homeric story,  
And from the marble summoned Homer's self ;

One than the rest more weak, or more ambitious,  
Thought to a goddess he could give new birth,  
Deemed she was human, found the thrall delicious;—  
Failed earthly hands on what was not of earth !

Rare gift is yours for whom the times now olden  
Can be recalled on canvas or in stone ;  
Who to the prosy present un beholden  
Live lives poetic that are all your own.

Yet, as men tell—nay, fear not the confession—  
At Carnival you led the miming crowd.  
Who, Simonetti, thought of that procession  
Whereof the world of Rome might well be proud ?

Back from live joys unto dead bones and ashes,  
Which out of funeral urns shall rise again !  
Fair dames may scorn ; 'neath the Madonna's lashes  
Beam tender eyes that ne'er can cause you pain.

*MY OWN FIRESIDE.*

WHEN the world has wearied the worker's brain  
With its toil and traffic, its strife and din,  
Sweet, ah, sweet, 'tis to rest again  
Where the red light dances and glances within;  
Painting with colours fantastic and quaint  
Those pictures the day hath coldly eyed,  
The living sinner, the martyred saint,  
That hang by my own fireside.

Painting me scenes from the far-off past,  
The past when the world and I were young,  
Fugitive scenes that can scarcely last,  
But pleasant to linger a minute among;—  
Poor ashes of love in a broken urn—  
A harp unstrung, and a rose that hath died—

But the music and sweetness seem to return  
To me here by my own fireside.

A woman sings in the silent street  
An old love-song that *she* used to sing ;  
The melody, low and tender and sweet,  
Her face before me is fain to bring.  
It was here on my bended knees I besought  
Her to come to my hearth and heart, my bride ;—  
She came—and she's left me alone with thought  
To mourn by my own fireside.

It was here that he stood, the friend of my youth,  
That last long night ere his leave was up,  
And a *beau sabreur* he seemed, in truth,  
As we quaffed together the loving-cup.  
A curse on the savage arm that sped  
The weapon that laid him low in his pride ;  
But yet he comes from the realm of the dead  
At night to my own fireside.

It was here that I sat in the early days  
Of childhood, and listened to tales sublime  
Of warlike work and of warriors' ways,  
An old voice quavered in ballad rhyme.  
It is here that I sit and wait for the sound  
Of the stern command we must all abide,  
That shall send me to take up other ground  
Afar from my own fireside.

## A FADED FLOWER,

KIND hands the easy chair have rolled  
To leave it 'neath the lime-tree's shade,  
Where she, now grown so grey and old,  
Would wander when a maid.

Her eyes upon a volume rest—  
Long nights of tears have made them dim—  
But in the poet's pages prest  
A memory breathes of him—

Breathes in a rose whose breath is faint;—  
Of her life's summer 'twas the last,  
And with it Fancy's fingers paint  
A picture of the past.



O'er all the earth there lies the hush  
Of afternoon. Two figures trace  
The garden path. A maiden blush  
Mounts on her aged face,

For he is speaking. He the fair  
Embodiment of manhood's truth  
Seems as he softly whispers there—  
The lover of her youth.

Whispers that ere the breeze could steal  
The roses' dewy pearls, he sought  
A flower that should to her reveal  
His heart's unspoken thought.

Before that summer breeze returned  
To bring the roses' bloom again,  
Flickered the love that fierce had burned,  
And joy gave birth to pain.

Another ne'er could be the same,  
Though she became another's wife,  
And proudly wears an honoured name ;—  
But such is woman's life.

## THE LANGUAGE OF RUINS.

HERE, 'mid the memories of bygone ages,  
Pondering pause awhile  
On those departed kings, and saints, and sages  
Who trod this cloistered aisle.

Say, have from hence their spirits wholly vanished,  
While still these stones can last,  
Or, if the Present in its turn be banished,  
Can we recall the Past?

Eldest of arts, she leaves her relics hoary  
For mortals yet to come.  
Music and Painting have for all their story;—  
Is Architecture dumb?

Are there for nought, her high and reverend places?

Each one of them repeats

In clearest type our triumphs and disgraces,

Our victories and defeats?

Whate'er her style, the Saxon, Norman, Doric,

She's aye a tale to tell :

"Beauty's light tread hath made these stones his-  
toric,

Or there some hero fell.

"See where the crumbling hand of Time discloses

An old breach in the wall ;—

Warwick's handwriting when the rival Roses

Contended for the Hall.

"In yonder turret died the hoyden Hester,

Slain by a jealous lord ;

Here rang at noon the rude song of the jester,

Or flashed a gallant's sword."

Whisper me not these mailed men are ghostly,  
    Their shining armour rust,  
Or these fair dames ne'er had existence mostly,  
    And those who had are dust.

## A LAY OF ILL-LUCK.

IN youth my pastors and my masters  
Said there was no such thing as luck ;—  
Men always meeting with disasters  
Deserved to struggle in the ruck.  
Is such the case? Nor priest nor poet,  
No creeds nor cantos do I scan ;—  
I only claim, and all may know it,  
To be a most unlucky man.

“Labour” I preach less than I practise.  
Practice o’er preaching must prevail,  
They told me. But the simple fact is  
Whate’er I touch appears to fail.  
I’ve failed as lawyer and lamplighter,  
As soldier, sailor, sacristan,

And even as a sporting writer:—

Most truly an unlucky man.

I never rode a mare to stop her

Like certain parties I could tell,

Nor did a deed half so improper

As nursing any dear gazelle;—

I surely should have broke the bridle

If once I tried the pulling plan,

And e'en a darling doll-eyed idol

Would spurn such an unlucky man.

They placed me in a merchant's office :

I never had a pound's "increase ;"

My lazy chum (who such a toff is)

Married the Co's consumptive niece.

When hedging I fell into ditches—

Correctly hedge I never can—

All things I dropped except the stitches

In both my sides—unlucky man !

I don't suppose I'm very handsome,  
Yet have a playful vein of fun ;—  
Young maidens, when I'd fain entrance 'em  
With witty words, why do they run ?  
I'm far from frolicksome or flirty,  
No slender waists I strive to span,  
But when I ask for Grace or Gerty,  
Mamma says "No—unlucky man !"

Disliked alike by maid and matron,  
I walk the weary world alone :  
I've ne'er found e'en a wealthy patron  
Who yearned to make his wealth mine own.  
My wisdom—dear I've had to buy it—  
Is worthless under Folly's ban :—  
Here's going cheap, and who will try it,  
The luck of an unlucky man !



## IN THE MASTER'S ROOM.

THE business of the day is done,  
A pipe emits a faint perfume ;  
The master of the house hath won  
His quiet hour within his room.

The flames upon the hearth at play  
Bring out the pictures on the wall,  
The papers piled in disarray,  
The books that on each other fall

Each volume wears a kindly face,  
As of a true and trusty friend ;  
Battered maybe, devoid of grace,  
But frank of converse, free to lend.

Dryden and "Druid," side by side,  
The poet and the sportsman pen ;

See Nana blushing seek to hide  
Behind a row of Reverend men.

A lawyer's lease has business with  
A manuscript of schoolboy rhymes ;  
Beneath the works of Adam Smith  
Are copies of the *Sporting Times*.

To meet the light there lowly stoop  
Some copies of Salvator's views ;  
In yon alcove 's a marble group,  
A Nymph, a Naiad, and a Muse.

Near Paley's placid brow a brush—  
(Eh ! but it was a stout old fox)—  
Nell Gwynne is making Cromwell blush,  
Queen Mary has a smile for Knox.

What dynasties domestic reign,  
What cook may come, what governess go,  
Here is the master's small domain,  
*Imperium in imperio.*

MY LADY SINGING.

THE curtains for the night are drawn ;  
Long since the last birds went a-winging  
Their nestward flight, and o'er the lawn  
Come tender notes with moonlight's dawn—  
I hear my lady singing.

I see her not, nor know for whom  
Those notes are struck ; yet Fancy, swinging  
Her censer o'er me, through the gloom  
Wafts a fair form into my room—  
It is my lady singing.

A thing of loveliness and joy,  
Dark curls from whitest brow she's flinging,

Wherewith the moonbeams love to toy;—

And nought can trouble or annoy

What time my lady's singing.

Old songs she sings, and each recalls

Old memories in the strain upspringing ;

Old ballad-songs of barons' halls,

Of maiden tryst and magic thralls,

Hark to my lady singing !

Songs of the golden harvest-time,

The scent of cornfields round them clinging,

While far the village church bells chime,

And seem to sound a solemn rhyme

Unto my lady's singing.

Italia's songs wherein I hear

All bird-choirs under heaven ringing ;—

Then falls a dirge upon the ear,

And lo ! a funeral is near,

And still my lady's singing.

On floats the music, such a throng

Of quaint associations bringing.

The lamp is burning low—and long

The shadows fall—and ends the song.

No more my lady's singing.

## THE LAND OF LOVE.

IN the world of Fancy there lies a land  
Unknown as yet to geographers ;  
If a man has a love this realm he has scanned  
In many a glance of hers.  
It's a land where the women's eyes are bright,  
Lips ruby-red and teeth pearl-white,  
And where kisses are borne with echo light  
On every breeze that stirs ;—  
  
Where the evening skies are gemmed with stars,  
And somewhere about is a crescent moon,  
And Venus ever is smiling at Mars,  
And the year remains at June.  
At every window's a Juliet face,  
White shoulders gleam through mantillas of lace,  
Love-songs are sung with serenest grace  
To harps that are ever in tune :—

Where by ripples of silver are constantly laved  
The golden sands of a fairy isle ;  
Where fans are fluttered and hands are waved,  
Soft bosoms heaving the while ;  
Where language flows in a natural rhyme,  
And where on ladder of roses may climb  
The lover to heights which appear sublime  
For the boon of a lady's smile.

The fruit's ever ripe and the flowers in bloom  
In the land whereof we are drawing the chart ;  
The air is heavy with rich perfume,  
Undreamed of perfumer's art.  
And the dames and the gallants who therein dwell  
Sweet tales in a sweet-voiced language tell,  
And the men of all nations speak it well—  
The language of the heart.

## THE PROFESSOR EXPLAINS.

"You young ladies take it queerly—ladies often  
think me queer—

I've not married, though I'm nearly now upon my  
seventieth year."

"Never been in love, Professor?" "I'm not made  
of ice nor snow :

There was some one was possessor of my heart a  
while ago.

'Tis a tale I've ne'er repeated to the comrades  
tried and true,

Near whom, night by night, I'm seated in the  
common-room at New.

Here are influences mystic make me think a little less  
Of the creed misogynistic that I love there to pro-  
fess.



Has this hospitable mansion at this season played  
a part

In such unforeseen expansion of a shrunk and  
withered heart ?

Have those eyes 'neath silken lashes of Miss Lil's  
—nay, do not stir—

Seen by firelight's fitful flashes made me think of  
one like her ?

I was but her brother's tutor. She would just as  
soon, no doubt,

Have regarded as a suitor valet, groom, or college  
scout.

But it chanced that I could serve her as no other  
could just then ;

And I—went with fatuous fervour to my fall, like  
other men.

She was convent-taught, and Latin was a little in  
her line ;

So she'd come in sheeny satin to the study known  
as mine,

With her jewels brightly glancing, and her eyes  
more bright than they,

And a rhythmic walk like dancing, and a winning,  
gracious way.

Now she'd come for explanation of a tense, or  
term, or phrase,

Now with tidbits for translation from an old love-  
poet's lays :

Slender, supple, almost elfin, looked her dainty  
finger-tips,

As she'd hold the dog's-eared Delphin, seem to  
hang upon my lips

With the heroines I'd compare her, who yet live  
in classic song—

Beings younger, fresher, fairer, than to modern  
times belong ;

---

‘Pure and true as was *Ænone*, and like *Nausicaa*  
kind’—

Who has had the fit alone he knows how lovers  
can be blind.

Disappointment? Disillusion? Yes, in course of  
time they came ;

With them self-contempt, confusion, and a sense of  
wrong and shame.

Wealthiest of all the neighbours was a young and  
learnèd lord ;

Hence my lady’s classic labours, and the tale I’ve  
to record.

In those parts they viewed his lordship as a social  
pioneer ;

Half his days were passed aboard ship ; it so  
chanced the previous year

To the States and the Dominion he had strayed,  
and the result

Was a certain fixed opinion as to woman's higher cult.

Way to make a titled marriage soon herein my  
lady saw,

Ride in coroneted carriage, to the country-side give  
law ;

So she plied me with her questions when we too  
were quite alone,

And my comments and suggestions reached his  
lordship as her own.

Thus I helped to win my rival for the girl I'd fain  
have won.

From love-sickness my survival left me bitter days  
to run.

Sad I sought dear Alma Mater ; but, within her  
fostering arms,

I, become a woman-hater, ne'er forgot one woman's  
charms.

Eagerly I conned each libel that old poets per-  
petrate

On the sex (no diatribe 'll turn a true love into hate) ;  
Found the food for which one hungers, when the  
spirit's turned to gall,

In those acrid scandalmongers, Terence, Horace,  
Juvenal.

In the Mantuan's tale of Dido I would revel at  
my ease ;

To my faithful collie Fido would recite Euripides."

"And the lady, Mr. Hermit?" "Diamonded, no  
doubt, and pearled,

Rank and wealth give her the 'permit' through  
the fashionable world."

"Her of whom you speak with scorn, let your  
tongue no more assault,

For they laid her yestermorning in the dim ances-  
tral vault."

“Eh? I’m off, girls! Dead and buried? It is  
getting rather late.”

\* \* \* \* \*

And that night old Charon ferried the Professor to  
his fate.

A HELPING HAND.

ONWARD we struggle with eager paces,  
On through the burden and heat of the day,  
Most with haggard and haunting faces,  
Eagerly onward as best we may.  
Some of us pause by a cross and pray ;  
Some have a curse at their quick command ;  
Some of us faint and fall by the way,  
All for the want of a helping hand.

Maiden of manifold airs and graces,  
The world your stage and your life a play,  
Beautiful, blessèd, no doubt, your case is—  
Won't you a mite for such happiness pay ?  
Think, when the revel of life is gay,

Of sisters who at your portal stand ;  
    Show yourself a beneficent fay,  
And stretch to the helpless a helping hand.

Names of some the Recorder traces,  
    Fighters themselves in the fevered fray,  
Who find for fallen forms an oasis  
    Midmost the desert wherein they're astray—  
    The kindly word that's so easy to say,  
The blessing shed o'er the life that's banned,  
    The rift of light when the clouds are grey,  
The whispered hope and the helping hand.

## ENVOI.

The needs of the sinning poor to allay  
    Were duty meet for the good and grand ;—  
Lest viler be deemed than the pauper clay  
    The holder-back of the helping hand.



## STOLEN FRUIT.

OF proverbs all may read who run,  
Wisdom of many, wit of one,  
This hath, methinks, the rest outdone,  
    In truth by far completest:—  
Or sex or dispositions scan,  
It's true of woman and of man,  
Deny it, masters, if you can,  
    That stolen fruit is sweetest.

Those truant hours away from school,  
That Sunday morning game at pool—  
Who has not loved to play the fool  
    In days of young existence?  
If folly 'tis to snatch the prize  
That seems most tempting to our eyes,  
Nor heed the Future where it lies  
    Beyond us in the distance.

Does money earned by sweat of brow  
Give satisfaction, tell me now,  
Like what is won, but when or how  
    'Twere best to ask no questions?  
I've heard that thieves lead jovial lives,  
That forgers seldom beat their wives,  
And happy's he whose wit connives  
    At wickedest suggestions.

The youth Mamma brings home to tea,  
Whose fortune's safely in the Three  
Per Cents., who fiddles "Doo-dum-dee,"  
    And goes to Church on Sunday,  
Is scorned for that Bohemian friend  
Who's met where thick the branches bend,  
And who, 'twere safe to swear, will wend  
    His road to ruin one day.

A hand too high in place of pride,  
Or else a hand, as will betide,

Too low to dangle by our side,  
We seek, full sure to rue it.  
Who 'd kiss a mouth with gems though pearled,  
Or nurse a head though auburn-curled,  
When all the world was there, the world  
Expecting him to do it?

What hunting men are pleased like those,  
Who, wheresoever Reynard goes,  
Permit no fences to oppose  
Their headlong rush for glory,  
But, knowing every road and lane,  
Trot easily a point to gain  
Whence fruitful matter they obtain  
For after-dinner story?

Men win a classic race or cup  
Who own good horses, and have up  
The best of jocks—but fail to sup  
The sweetest cream of racing

That's left for little people who  
Can "keep" a daisy-cutting screw,  
And sneak a handicap or two  
By dint of clever "placing."

It's human nature—very sad  
We're all so desperately bad—  
It's nature in the king or cad  
His neighbour's goods to covet.  
We all are envious each of each :  
Prigged sermons parsons love to preach ;  
Tom's apple's better than my peach—  
Tom's apple—so I love it.

## NOTHING IN THE PAPER.

My modest morning meal is spread,  
Tea, coffee, rolls, and butter ;  
My pious better-half has said  
Her grace without a stutter.  
A true-born Englishman, I curse  
The truly English weather,  
And stab a steak I vow is worse  
Than if 't were cut from leather.  
I scowl across at Dame Margot,  
A scowl that can't escape her ;—  
She reads it right, and answers, "No,  
There's nothing in the Paper."

Our planet's round the sun revolved,  
And nothing been invented?

Old marriages not been dissolved,  
Nor new ones been cemented?  
Did not Egyptians rise or fall?  
Did none complete life's journey?  
Are there no failures to recall  
Poor "Overend and Gurney"?  
Can neither hall nor hovel show  
Some little new-born gaper?  
There's surely something happened—"No,  
There's nothing in the Paper."

Hath naught occurred that could supply  
The empty page with leaders?  
For journalistic ink is dry  
Without continual feeders.  
Have we struck from our lives a day,  
And naught the lesson teaches?  
Has Libel not a fine to pay?  
Made Politics no speeches?

Has not Von Bismarck tried a throw,  
Nor Bernhardt cut a caper?  
Tichborne unseated Bradlaugh?—"No,  
There's nothing in the Paper."

No record that the crowd can please  
Whose pleasure on the Turf is?  
No tale of murder or disease  
Among the Irish Murphies?  
No news to guarantee or guide  
The too despondent trader?  
No Christian telling how to hide  
The possible invader?  
No revelations from F. O.?  
No bankrupt Dean or draper?  
No burglaries nor burnings?—"No,  
There's nothing in the paper."

No caustic cuts about Crim. Con.,  
No details of divorces?

No frantic Russia falling on  
The Turk with all her forces?  
No critic who has found a slip  
In some one's work on Science?  
No prophet with a weather tip  
On which to place reliance?  
Does Brush resign the Tally-ho,  
Because an ankle taper  
Seen on a certain door-step?—"No,  
There's nothing in the Paper."

Nothing! And is it but for this,  
While we're in slumber's keeping,  
A staff of men forego the bliss  
Attendant upon sleeping,  
Before us on a sheet to lay,  
Revealed as if by magic,  
Life-dramas all the world doth play,  
The comic and the tragic?



We look on scenes of weal and woe  
As through a filmy vapour ;  
And each to each we simper—"No,  
There's nothing in the Paper."

## A SONNET OF MARCH.

FRESH as sea-maiden, freshly come from seas  
That smiled at her reflected in her eyes,  
Where they imprinted their cerulean dyes,  
Bounding she comes across the hills and leas;  
Her russet robes are outspread in the breeze,  
And from their folds there drops a floral prize,  
Primrose and violet, as in speed she flies,  
And, flying, decks with leaflets all the trees.  
True child of Nature, rough and rude at times,  
Her smile is smooth as any poet's rhymes,  
And, though the morning strength of her young  
arm  
Is oft upraised as though intending harm,  
In peace she leaves us with the evening chimes,  
And for all ill she wrought she leaves a charm.

*A SONNET OF APRIL.*

A GIRL upon the brink of maidenhood,  
Her eyes assume a clearer, softer sheen,  
Her step becomes more stately and serene,  
And flowers upspring on whate'er spot she stood.  
The cuckoo's voice that woos her to the wood,  
Adown the aisles those hoary trunks between,  
Tells her of something, dreamed, but not yet  
seen ;—

She blushes, and she knows not why she should.  
The tear that dims the azure of her eye  
By Love's sweet smile is very swiftly dried ;  
The storm that drifts across the tranquil sky  
Of her young life, ere scarce 'tis born, hath died ;  
Blessings she pours upon us, passing by,  
And ushers in fair May, the summer's bride.

## A DANCING GIRL.

HER form is instinct with the grace  
That marks an ancient Eastern race,  
Suggesting or the panther's spring  
Or serpent's glide. She seems a thing  
Of beauty, where the eye can trace  
Nature's own handiwork, nor bring  
To memory aught that Art's embrace  
Has folded for its perfecting—  
Fresh as the sea, free as the sky,  
Some nomad nation's progeny.

Mark you the carriage of her head!  
Have ever women, northern bred,  
Though sweet as honey and as mild,  
The witchery of this Southern child?

Didst note that wave of richest red  
Beneath her dark cheek when she smiled?  
Though motionless as one that's dead,  
Her eyes have something startled, wild  
Within them when a step draws near,  
That's half defiance and half fear.

But see! She starts. Her ears have caught  
A strain from out some source unseen;  
Although by no preceptor taught,  
There's music in her soul, I ween.  
A subtle essence of romance  
Steals o'er me with the rhythmic dance.  
Now a low melodious measure  
Speaks of afternoon and leisure  
Ha! we're in the gorgeous East;  
I'm a Rajah at the least.  
Cross-legged in a golden chair,  
At my back of chiefs a pair,  
I behold my lithe-limbed pets

Step in time to castanets.

One—nay, houris half a score

Traverse my shawl-softened floor ;

Pass, repass, thread in and out,

Till the eye is left in doubt,

Gazing on the jewels shining,

On the figures intertwining,

If—— but lo ! the dance is done,

And the figures are but one.

With a wild tumultuous rush

Comes the music. Then a hush

And I know the moment now is

Ere two armies test their prowess.

Now I see the dusky faces

Of my foes in strengthened places

Which are destined to give way

To my skill ere fall of day.

Now——

Mistaken !

I am not  
In a blood-stained battle-spot !  
But with some one by my side,  
Some one soon to be my bride,  
As the shadows slow are creeping  
O'er the plain, as stars are peeping  
Past the far line of the sea,  
Riding, riding, I and she,  
Through the mystic sacred land  
Where the Master used to stand  
Teaching all who'd hear Him then  
Gracious ways of God to men.  
From surroundings, sweet and holy,  
Something chastened, soft and lowly,  
Seems to hold my love ;—her eyes  
From their looks of bright surprise  
Dimmed are——

Oh ! ten thousand devils,  
Shrieks and pandemonian revels,  
Hell let loose, inhuman dances,

Blistering grips and burning glances,  
Sparks of fire from Vulcan's forges  
Echoes of Olympian orgies—  
Dance like this, provoking slaughter,  
Danced was by Herodias' daughter,  
And——

          The requiem, soft and low,  
End of all things bids us know ;  
And the dancer bobs serenely,  
Quits us with a gesture queenly ;  
And the poet bids you note,  
Ere assuming hat and coat,  
That his medley so was made  
By the dance-tunes which were played.



*LIFE'S A CHASE.*

HERE, in my cosy corner-place,  
Mine elbow near the spirit-case,  
I sit and vow that life's a chase  
    'Like that to-day I've been through—  
A stern, hard chase, as they will find  
Who in the run are left behind,  
While all the country round's so blind  
    It really can't be seen through.

How cheery was the morning's start !  
How many comrades, true of heart,  
Were by my side to take my part  
    Against all opposition !  
How bright the sunshine o'er my head !  
How gaily seemed my horse to tread

Beneath me, as if thoroughbred,  
And in the best condition !

Then came the sudden brilliant burst,  
When all were forward, I was first,  
A broken neck my lot at worst,  
A death made sweet by glory.  
The irremediable mistake  
Occurred when pride the pace would make  
So hot as rivals to forsake—  
The old familiar story.

The gateway where there came a hitch—  
The broken ground that was my “pitch”—  
My horse’s hind-legs in a ditch,  
While all the field swept by us—  
No one to lend a helping hand—  
Gay gibes to greet me where I stand,  
Unhorsed, but having great command  
Of aspirations pious.

The tedious galloping to points  
With dizzy head and aching joints,  
While perspiration's dew anoints

The manly brow and whisker—  
The interviews with yokels who've  
Seen objects that some sheep-dogs prove—  
The wish that Pegasus could move  
His limbs a little brisker.

Some artful dodging down the lanes,  
Which skilled manœuvre nothing gains  
On hounds that, spite of pace and pains,  
Are always from me turning—  
Some dalliance, maybe too long,  
With yon farm-maid, fair, tall and strong,  
From whom some facts (of course all wrong)  
Took many minutes learning.

Thus, when pursuing fame or fox,  
In style correct or heterodox,

'T is vainly we'd the compass box,  
If once astray our course is.  
Who at the start of nothing reck,  
Now hunt an ever distant speck,  
And oh! how they desire a check  
To help them join their horses.

Then darkness gaining, hope gone out,  
Homeward's the solitary route,  
With little left to talk about  
Except defeat and folly—  
The promise of the morning gone,  
The sun long set so bright that shone,  
No happy pages left to con  
Of life's book erst so jolly.

Yes, yes, my comrades, life's a chase,  
Where 't is not theirs who force the pace  
To finish in the foremost place—  
The rule is, "Straight and Steady."

He's happy who heard "Tally-ho,"  
And tried through life at speed to go,  
If he a fearless face can show  
To hear the "Whoo-whoop" ready.

## A CATULLIAN RIDDLE.

Quæris quot mihi basiationes.—C. vii.

A RIDDLE ! How many embraces  
Of yours, dear, would satisfy *me* ?  
Do you mark the sand-line that one traces,  
As far as the vision can see,  
From here where I con my love-story,  
On the steps of the Royal Hotel,  
To where yonder monument hoary  
Is raised to some pious old swell ?  
Can you count all the grains in that desert of  
sand ?  
So many embraces, my love, I'd command.

Do you mark at the firmament's portals  
The sentries that silently shine

O'er the little intrigues of us mortals?

So many embraces be mine.

Mad, mad, with love-madness your poet

Would thus to your riddle reply:—

A man must have counted—to know it—

The sand and the stars in the sky.

Such riddles, sweet sphynx, will all questioners  
vex—

'The answer's a number. That number is—X!

## TWO ROSES.

## I.

BEHIND an ancient garden-wall,  
Two buds to beauty blowing ;  
Within an old ancestral hall,  
Two graceful maidens growing  
To womanhood's more perfect grace ;  
Then soon their life-paths parted ;  
'Mid wealth and pomp one takes her place,  
One dies here broken-hearted.

## II.

One maiden leaves the parent home  
In the first glow of summer,  
Through pleasure's mazy haunts to roam ;  
All welcome the new-comer !  
See round her swarm the butterflies  
Of Folly and of Fashion !



She smiles on all, for none she sighs—  
Her heart 's unmoved by passion.

## III.

One bud is severed from the bough,  
Scarce blossomed to a flower ;  
The butterflies flit o'er it now  
Within my lady's bower.  
My lady's bosom 's warm and white ;  
The heart it veils is frozen ;  
Her eyes are bright, but 'neath their light  
Fade roses by the dozen.

## IV.

Afar in yon old-fashioned hall  
One maiden 's still abiding ;  
The well-beloved is she of all,  
The love that kills she 's hiding.  
Her path seems one of pleasantness,  
By sorrow's cloud unshaded ;  
Fond lips may bless, fond hands caress,  
But ere the rose she 's faded.

## V.

Faded ! while yet upon the tree  
Her favourite rose was clinging—  
A flower she oft would come to see,  
Low love-songs to it singing.  
They bore it gently from repose  
One midnight, dark and stilly,  
To where she lay—the living rose  
Must mourn the dying lily.

## VI.

Those flowers are dead that sought to smile  
'Mid Fashion's lurid glories ;  
These flowers may live a little while  
Where she whom they adore is.  
Draw down the curtains noiselessly ;—  
'T is thus the drama closes—  
On one fair form the roses die,  
One dies beneath the roses.

## URBANA IN RURE.

Municipem rigidi quis te, Marcella, Salonis?—MARTIAL xii. 21.

By a British stream you live,  
There were born? No credit  
Unto such a tale we give,  
Whosoever said it.  
Such an accent, voice, and air!  
Nothing you 've to shame you.  
Paris courtiers, everywhere  
Hearing you, would claim you.  
'Mid near districts of ill-fame,  
Or far regions hilly,  
Find your demoiselles the same  
As my Gallic lily?  
Long 't will be ere shall be shown  
In Parisian places

One who, foreign-born, can own  
Such Parisian graces.  
Where he be he hath no care,  
Who this maiden marries:—  
By her side, her presence rare  
Makes for him his Paris.

ROMANCE OF AN OLD GARDEN.

MODERN culture there is none

In the calm and lovely scene ;

Herbs and flowers spring, every one,

As if in spontaneous sheen,

Red and green,

Lavish fruit for loving labour

Yielding to their lord and neighbour,

By whose ancestors they cherished long have been.

Looking o'er the parapet

On the garden, primly laid

Out in fashion Dutchmen set,

Quaintly stiff, antiquely staid,

I'm afraid

That my wayward fancies wander  
From my book, and pause to ponder  
Upon dramas that these pleasancess saw played.

Here her lover she would meet—  
She whose portrait in the hall  
Face and figure hath complete  
With a charm that must enthrall  
Eyes of all—  
Face that might be modelled after  
Hers around whom Love and Laughter\*  
Flit—and figure, like Diana's, lithe and tall.

I can see her standing now,  
Locks uplifted by the breeze,  
While she listens to the vow  
Hughie whispers on his knees,  
'Neath the trees ;

\* Quam jocus circum volat et Cupido.

Then, ere yet she realizes  
That he's gone, his shout arises—

“To my lady, and the King across the seas!”

For Dutch William held the crown,  
Taken from the Stuart line,  
But, the country up and down,  
There were men in '89  
Who'd combine,  
'Cross the seas and 'cross the border,  
To restore the ancient order;  
And thy lover's cause, fair Eleanor, was thine.

Then through all the length of days  
That Dutch William ruled the land,  
Suitors, so the record says,  
Only earned her reprimand,  
Though her hand  
Many courtiers, gay and sprightly

Many nobles, brave and knightly,  
Sought with offers that few women would with-  
stand.

But when old Sir Geoffrey died  
Came his title to an end,  
And Dutch William let his pride  
To the haughty heiress bend.

Would she lend  
Kindly ear? Would she consider  
Claim of one who was a bidder  
For her favour, and who'd been the monarch's  
friend?

Let the baronetcy in  
This bold German be renewed.  
Could she better hope to win?  
Was she but a heartless prude  
To obtrude  
Whim of hers against the wishes



Of the King, in scorn of riches,  
And a lover with all goodly gifts endued?

All in vain. Time onward flew.

Laid were both the Kings to rest.  
Fame spoke high of one, Sir Hugh,  
Who was fighting with the best—

Ah! she guessed

That her lover, loyal-hearted,  
Now the dogs of war were started,  
Steel was baring under Marlborough's behest.

Once again the garden-walk

She is pacing to and fro,  
Pausing here to pluck a stalk,  
There a leaf aside to throw.

Would you know  
From her steadfast mien and stately,  
And her lips that smile sedately,  
That the heart within her bosom's all aglow?

Very comely is the dame ;

Very buxom's she withal ;

Can she really be the same

As that maiden in the hall,

Lithe and tall ?

See her hair—what soft abundance !

See her figure's full redundance,

Half-concealed and half-revealed beneath her shawl !

As of old, her waist is slim,

And her eyes have power to slay

Any unsuspecting "him "

Who the lover's part would play,

And a stray

Love-lock from beneath her whimple

Nestles near a rougish dimple,

As she listens—lifts her head—and looks away.

Horses' hoofs are coming near,

Coming swiftly up the ride ;

(Can that be a happy tear

On her dainty cheek undried?)

All her pride

She must call to aid her quickly,

Lest the accents come too thickly,

As she welcomes him to whom her life is tied.

To the Royal grace restored

By his deeds in desperate fight,

He may lay aside his sword

In his lovely lady's sight—

'Tis his right!—

Now no more his heart to harden,

Nor to hurry from the garden

Where she prayed for his returning day and night.

## CARMEN NUPTIALE.

‘Hymen o Hymenæe, Hymen ades o Hymenæe.’—CATULLUS.

SAY, is the lyric goddess dead?

Have we no hands to cull us

Such flowers as living fragrance shed

O’er love-songs of Catullus?

A fairer dream, a sweeter theme,

No ancient inspiration

E’er had than this—a song of bliss

For loved ones of our nation.

She’s well-beloved, though lately come

Our sea-girt home to dwell in,

For whom to-day the lyre we thrum—

A fair Teutonic Helen—

Fair as the name which ancient fame

For beauty’s type selected—

With charm and grace of form and face  
Immortally connected.

And he—may he before him hold,  
So shall his worth be heightened,  
His name-sire, Belgium's Leopold,  
The manly and enlightened.  
Though Royal born, he will not scorn  
On this, a lifetime's crisis,  
A garland strung by one among  
His fellows on the Isis.

The year is at its joyous Spring ;  
All Nature seems to gaily  
In chorus with our voices sing  
The "Carmen Nuptiale."  
"Who ne'er have loved, let them be moved  
To thoughts of love to-morrow :  
Who've loved, again a loving strain  
From sweet surroundings borrow."

The Bride uplifts a Spring-like face ;  
Beholders thereon printed  
The season's ripening beauties trace,  
Not indistinctly hinted.

Rose blossoms there blush on a fair  
Groundwork of whitest lilies—  
For blooms to vie with these, go try  
The flower-famed far Antilles.

A theme that's old yet ever new,  
This oft-sung theme of Beauty,  
The which to sing, where'er 't is due,  
Is but the singer's duty !

As German maid, her way was laid  
Through flowery paths and painless :  
As English wife,\* may be her life  
From sorrow's touch as stainless !

C. C. R.

\* The writer of these lines little thought how soon his pen would have to chronicle the greatest sorrow that could touch the "English wife."

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES.

PART II.





In Memoriam :

THE DUKE OF ALBANY.

FROM yon most fair resort of the health-seeker  
Comes a dark message on funereal wings,  
All hearts to pierce and make all pulses weaker  
With tidings that it brings.

Gay sparkling Cannes ! whose air's elastic lightness  
From invalids can lift their sickness' band,  
Now have you cast a shadow from your brightness  
Upon our northern land.

He was so young whom to your care we trusted,  
Scarce entering the meridian of life's day ;  
Yet must he fall before old travellers, rusted  
With wearying of the way.

Shall we rebel that he has left so early,  
Smiles on his lips, no wrinkles on his brow,  
Nor waited till Old Age, sad-eyed and surly,  
Had said the fatal "Now"?

He was all good. But of the heartfelt praises,  
That with fresh honour heaped an honoured name,  
Greatest is this—no tongue, the world o'er, raises  
For him one word of blame.

And from his life whoever lifts the valance  
Sees how laborious was his daily round :  
Zealous and kind, was he weighed in the balance  
Ever, and wanting found?

Midmost the crowd, the ruder souls and rougher  
Hoard words of his upon their memory's shelf :  
"Surely I 've pity for the sick that suffer,  
Who 've suffered so myself."

Through all the world of books, as one who needed  
No guide, he wandered carelessly at will :

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His books look down, reproachful and unheeded—  
Why are their pages still?

Pure as a Bayard, chivalrous and loyal,  
“Without reproach” the motto on his shield,  
Laurels are his green as e’er Princes Royal  
Gathered from tented field.

Bright beam above us stars in each direction :  
Yet moisture from them seems our eyes to steep.  
Can the stars mourn our Prince? Nay, on reflection,  
It is ourselves who weep.

## PRINCE EUGENE LOUIS NAPOLEON.

THE hope and pride of beauteous France,  
Our own adopted son,  
His life has been one brief romance,  
And lo! the tale is done.

How few short years have passed away  
Since she we all admire  
Heard how her son 'd received that day  
His baptism of fire!

And now she hears in distant land,  
And quarrel not his own,  
A weapon from a savage hand  
Has struck her darling down.

A hero's doom, a soldier's death,  
All honour to the brave!

Mix laurel with the cypress wreath

    You lay upon his grave !

No words that can bestow relief

    On loss like hers we bring ;

Two mighty nations share her grief,

    Two tongues his requiem sing.

## HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

HUSHED is the voice that o'er the wide Atlantic  
Oft reached our ears in rhythmic waves of song,  
Now gently wise, now tenderly romantic,  
Now practical and strong.

Hushed is the voice ! In silence now the singer  
Sinks, full of years and honour, to his rest ;  
Blow swiftly, winds, from Britain's shores, and wing  
her  
Condolence to the West.

He was half ours. From veins of Yorkshire yeomen  
Sprang the brave blood that made his song so  
brave;  
Albeit so tender, piercing freedom's foemen,  
And striking for the slave.

'Mid that new world of trade and loss and profit,  
Where time and men and money all go fast,  
Slowly he moved—was in it, yet not of it,  
But rather of the Past.

Old song, old legend, wove their charm around  
him ;  
Chimes from old belfries in his ear were rung ;  
And modern manners mediæval found him,  
As were the men he sung.

Yet not alone the Scandinavian Viking,  
Or Norman baron, claimed the poet's pen.  
Weeps fair Evangeline ! See Standish striking  
Down hosts of dusky men !

'Mid present scenes still by past memories haunted,  
Cambridge God's Acre loved he passing well ;  
Thence would he turn to grapple with, undaunted,  
Legends the Rabbins tell.

So hence he passes, broken scarce nor bended  
By weight of years Time laid upon his head,  
Rocking him softly to his rest, and tended  
By hands his hands had led.

Even as the Rhine, whose grape in youth he tasted,  
Richer in fame becomes from ruins round,  
And, with no ripple of its waters wasted,  
At last in ocean's drowned,

So was the poet's life. Through old tradition  
Passing, and plucking thence its fruits sublime,  
Walked he full-handed until lost to vision  
In shoreless seas of Time.

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A BOUQUET FROM CANNES.

IN its wooden case packed so securely,  
It lies nestling there,  
And though faded is fair,  
And breathes yet a fragrance that purely  
Contrasts with this nicotined air.

By the breath of the flowers am I wafted  
To the place where they grew  
Near the tideless sea's blue,  
And the fair winter town where was grafted  
A colony most of us knew.

A lithe form from the portico sallies,  
With its draperies, lace-bound,  
Lightly raised from the ground,  
And strolls down the rose-trellised alleys  
That the Villa Mont Fleuri surround.

With interest by time unabated  
Two pair of eyes strain  
Themselves, good view to gain  
Of St. Marguerite's fort, consecrated  
To the "Iron Mask" and to Bazaine.

Here narcissus and cyclamen mingled  
Recall a gay night  
Of the dance, and delight  
Wherewith some one's body all tingled  
At the touch of a hand gloved in white.

Lying lowly 'mid blossoms more splendid,  
Mignon, here's mignonette—  
'Tis your favourite yet,  
So I'm told, when by other hands tended  
Than his who danced with you that set.

This violet recalls my complaisance.  
Violette! the steep street  
How she'd toil up to meet

Me beneath the big, bare, old Renaissance  
Church, where was seclusion complete!

I turn from my window rain-blotted  
To find all the room  
Is with summer abloom,  
And the brightness that's been in Cannes potted  
Disinfecting my chambers from gloom.

Yes, all the gay scenes of Cannes' season,  
The costumes' varied hues,  
Greys and crimsons and blues,  
All the lights falling water or trees on,  
This bouquet would seem to diffuse.

## LE JOUR DES MORTS.

(ALL SAINTS' DAY, NOVEMBER 1ST.)

FROM pleasures as vain as they're evanescent  
We've one day's leisure, to turn aside,  
While we close the doors of our hearts to the Present,  
And ope to the Past—to the friends who've died.

At Père-Lachaise upon All Saints' morning,  
I watched the figures that came and went  
With wreaths and bouquets the tombs adorning,  
Till the air was heavy and rich with scent.

Far-off, on a bench up a by-path seated,  
I slept—and, in sleep, I beheld a stone  
That stood o'er a grave not long completed,  
And the name that I thereon read was my own.

O'er the stone a face, like a white, white rose's,  
Was bent, and a white hand doffed its glove,  
As it traced these words on a ground of posies—  
“*A mon fiancé.*” It was she—my Love!

Behind her, a form, grief-bowed, bare-headed ;  
'T was my chosen comrade in work or play,  
The friend who my life-course oft had steadied,  
Whose nod or frown was my “Yea” or “Nay.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Changes my dream. For the weeping willows,  
The weeping women, the dull green ground,  
Gems flash like stars, lace floats in billows,  
And the gay waltz-music's wafted around.

'Twixt dance and dance to an alcove, thickly  
Curtained, their way two dancers wend.  
My love has found consolation quickly  
In the loving arms of my faithful friend!

## EAUX DE VICHY.

MIRRORED fair and clear,  
If you'll trust the speaker,  
Scenes are that appear  
In my modest beaker.  
Wisdom's silvery tone,  
Beauty's colour peachy,  
Brilliance not their own  
Lend these Eaux de Vichy.

Dull they are, you say—  
Dull not less than bitter?  
Nay; they've life and play,  
And incessant glitter.  
Here before mine eyes  
Bubbles leap and tumble

That may well surprise  
In a draught so humble

Comes to Allier's banks,  
Straight from banks of Isis,  
Mingling with the ranks,  
Health-thirst here entices,  
One whom Wisdom's word  
Tells of work, position—  
Whence springs this absurd  
Bubble called Ambition?

Swift, he thinks, to soar  
When therewith inflated—  
Hopes to evermore  
Be with great ones mated—  
Scorning idle talk,  
Silks and the Casino,  
Seeks her side, who'll walk  
Sadly in merino.

Them may Vichy style  
    Wisdom and her double,  
Until Beauty's smile  
    Strikes the bumptious bubble.  
Lo ! it's blown away  
    By a puff of powder—  
Lost 'mid Madame's gay  
    Airy stuffs that "cloud" her.

Madame—who is she?  
    Ask me not—a picture  
Wherein Art can see  
    Never cause for stricture.  
Pastel from the past  
    Dropped upon the scene—yea,  
Just a slightly fast  
    Madame de Sévigné.

On the Allier's banks  
    A mysterious *châlet*



Is discovered, thanks  
To the *bonne* or valet.  
Monsieur throws his glove—  
Famed his lunge in tierce is:  
And the bubble Love  
Soon a sword-point pierces.

Love, Ambition fled,  
Other bubbles flitting,  
Vanish in their tread—  
And I, lonely sitting,  
See from North and South  
Folks 'mid sickness troubles  
At the glass's mouth  
Seeking still their bubbles.

In this hunt for health,  
While the water's swallowed,  
Fashion, fame, or wealth  
Oft's the quarry followed.

*Malades imaginaires,*

Imaginary M'ladies,  
Find that douche or air  
To impostors aid is.

Ah ! no bubbles rise

Now within my beaker ;—  
Doctors' tales are lies,  
And I'm daily weaker.  
Beauty's not for me ;  
Wisdom's voice is screechy ;  
Better Eau de Vie  
Suits than Eau de Vichy.

## KING CARNIVAL.

KING PANTALON, since you attracted  
Me first, a boy seamless of face,  
Old Time and myself have contracted  
Full many a line-cutting case.

My life then, O King, was as bright as  
The sunlit Italian clime,  
And my step on the pavement fell light as  
On the air falls a girl-spoken rhyme.

Black-robed, in red shirt, with three-cornered  
Hat, throned a high platform upon,  
In thy city of Venice no scorner'd  
Fail of duty to Rè Pantalon.

Shouts and laughter, and rattles and racket,  
And whistles and scraping of feet—  
*Confetti* poured forth by the packet—  
Was fairyland ever so sweet?

So childhood believed. And for later  
Youth Pantalon's orgy had charm,  
As I watched it, fresh from Alma Mater,  
A tiny white hand on my arm.

Ah me, to be coughless and goutless!  
That season once more to recall,  
When the *bouquet du Carnaval*, doubtless,  
Was the Englishmen's Mardi Gras ball!

*Manque de politesses*, or *manque de mollets*,  
Cause of cloth-covered legs we'd assume  
In the men; and not found in *Le Follet*  
Was many a lady's costume.

But now even their Carnivals sadly  
Our slow-hearted sons seem to take ;  
Not to live, love, or liquor so madly,  
Not to play for so heavy a stake.

Is it only our carcasses moulder,  
Our eyesight is dimmed? or, in truth,  
Has the world become older and colder,  
Since Pantalon reigned in our youth?

It may be that we loved too devoutly  
The fleshpots we cannot retain ;  
It may be we should gamble less stoutly,  
Could the cards be dealt over again.

Who knows? When the last dish, untasted,  
Is sent from the invalid's bed,  
If his time he's done well with or wasted,  
His last word of 'Carnival' 's said.

## ON THE BOULEVARDS.

THE metropolis of pleasure,  
Where the joy-bells never rest,  
Full of life and yet of leisure,  
Would you see her at her best?  
Follow where her crowds come daily,  
Crowds you do not meet elsewhere,  
Taking all things lightly, gaily,  
Flinging *calembours* at care.

See, the sun in all his splendour  
Shines on boulevard and on street,  
Peeps through gardens at scenes tender  
To which moonlight were more meet;  
On art-treasures which the ages  
Have collected pours his light,—

Tints with gold the city's pages,  
Making all her pictures bright.

Strolling down this path elm-shaded,  
We can see among the crowd  
Faces that long since have faded,  
Heads that long since have been bowed.  
Thronging all around us thickly  
Come the memories of the past ;  
But they vanish all too quickly :—  
Here is one—the best and last.

Here she comes, the proud and peerless  
Heroine of our boyish dream,  
Smiling, as of yore, in fearless  
Consciousness of charms supreme.  
*Chic* she is from dainty bonnet  
To the finger, gloved and spare,  
Which no longer has upon it  
That old ring she vowed to wear.

Will she see us as she passes?

Will she care to recognise

An old fogey sporting glasses?

Yes—though somewhat with surprise.

Time with her has dealt more kindly

Than with those she caused such woe

When her white hands bound them blindly—

Ah ! but that was long ago.

Long ago ! Begun and ended

Seems a lifetime since we gazed

On the face that now is bended

Towards us with a veil upraised.

And we mark a worn and wasted

Look in those great orbs of grey

Telling of some sweets that tasted

Bitter and were thrown away ;

And we miss in the maturer

Noontide of her beauty's rays



A soft something that was purer

In the girl of other days ;

And we seem to see reflected

In the mirror of her eyes

Youthful chances we neglected,

And an unattainèd prize.

Scarce one swiftly passing minute

Did she pause upon our view,

But a world of thought was in it

Of the old times and the new.

Now she's gone—no backward glancing

Of the eyes, no kerchief's wave—

When a voice in tones entrancing

Whispers, "*Mouton là qui rêve.*"

What is this? No sham ideal

Formed of boyhood's fevered thought,

But a substance, round and real,

That our circling arms have caught.

First a sound of girlish laughter,—  
Then a muttered “Oh, M’sieu !”  
Then some stifled words thereafter—  
Reader, what were they to you ?

’Twas the Boulevards’ cherished queenie ;  
Soft her tresses, and so sleek,  
And the rosy Amorini  
Hung in dimples on her cheek ;  
In her eye a brightness, blending  
With a subtle langour, shone,  
Which we mused upon while wending  
Our way homeward—not alone.

AUX DAMES.

“ Nous causerons de quelque jeune fille  
Dont la lèvre sourit, dont la prunelle brille.”

—GAUTIER.

To Women in these modern days  
The bard is all politeness ;  
Her inspiration lends his lays  
At least one half their brightness

For, ladies never dare we write  
As Chian wine and Massic  
Impelled the ancient poets dight  
By commentators classic.

’Tis true the old Egyptians showed  
How women could enamour  
Men’s hearts by compliments bestowed  
Upon them e’en in grammar.

But downward from Euripides  
The tale is sadly altered ;  
Catullus, Horace, none of these  
To rail at you have faltered.

One dame in Roman play we read  
Once wished to show compassion,  
And pardon straightway had to plead  
For acting out of fashion.

We now refrain from such abuse :—  
For one such diatribe 'll  
Your recent rhymster introduce  
Unto the law of libel.

Your eyes and lips and finger-tips,  
What staves we chant about them !  
Such props support a Muse that slips,  
A poor old Muse without them !

## A NORMAN PEASANT GIRL.

“TURN we a while, a little while, aside  
From garish scenes of passion, pomp, and pride,  
To where, across the Channel’s waters wide,  
A golden sand’s washed by a silver tide.  
There we may watch the sudden sea-gulls glide,  
Wing-wafted o’er the waves they lightly skim,  
Then skyward mount again; may hear the dim,  
Mysterious music of the slumb’rous waves,  
Echoed through hollows of wide-throated caves;  
As laden they tack home, may see the boats  
Of Norman fishers; may descry where floats,  
Just within range of sight, a ship of war,  
Like some huge phantom seen through mists afar.  
Before us all is smiling; but behind,  
The beetling cliff, old foeman of the wind,

E'en in repose seems on his brow to wear  
The frown long years of strife have printed there,  
And in his stern, impassive grandeur mocks  
The baby wavelets rippling round his rocks.  
The scene is scarcely beautiful? Oh, no!  
It lacks the purple shades, the crimson glow  
That mark Italian landscapes; all too faint,  
Too weak its colouring for your hand to paint;  
But painted for me by the magic brush  
Which memory wields, I own without a blush  
The scene an Eden seems. You don't believe—  
No, sir, nor I—in Eden without Eve.

"Rightwards a little—there—she's coming now."  
"A simple peasant!" "Mark her regal brow,  
Set round with snowy coif that might have been  
A queenly crown, nor crowned a queenlier queen.  
Her eyes give back your glances, frank and free,  
Yet without boldness; gazing on the sea  
So long they've caught its ever-changing hue,

Now grey, now almost black, now deepest blue.  
Her mouth, perhaps too large—her lips too thin—  
But those fair rows of ivory within,  
Who could wish to conceal? 'Tis true she smiles  
On very few, and at infrequent whiles.  
But when that rare, sweet smile her lips doth part,  
It flows from the fresh fountain of her heart—  
True smile of Nature, all untaught by Art.  
She speaks——” “A *patois* none can understand.”  
“Her voice would grace the highest in the land.”  
“'Tis somewhat rough.” “But with a hidden chord  
Of music that vibrates through every word.  
She moves; your artist-eye must love the sight  
Of that fine form, so rounded yet so light,  
Arrayed in kirtle short and bodice tight.”  
“But Eve—excuse me—has a hand and foot  
You'd scarce call *undersized*; and, then, her  
boot——”  
“Is fitted less for fashion than for use;  
And ill-timed is your critical abuse

Of hands that since the earliest break of morn  
The toil and labour of the day have borne.  
‘Small sixes’ do not rise at six, to make  
The dried-wood fire, the breakfast rolls to bake,  
The poultry-yard to tend, to milk the cows,  
To brew sour cider for the night’s carouse  
Of thirsty yokels; gather fruit and flowers,—  
The one to store, the other wreath in bowers  
That all the farmhouse windows may be sweet  
To sight and smell. Yet always she looks neat;  
*Simplex munditiis*, as now you see,  
A living sample of good housewifery.  
Nor is this all!” “Nay, patience’ self resents  
The whole long list of Eve’s accomplishments.”  
‘Back, worldling, to the world, its brittle toys,  
Its vain amusements, and its vicious joys;  
Leave me a little while, where I may scan  
Nature, as Nature is, and man as man;  
Where customs and costumes e’en yet retain  
Some faint aroma of old Saturn’s reign,



Before the Jove of fashionable life  
Came with his hell-wrought thunderbolts, at strife  
With all traditions of the former days,  
The old fidelity, the pleasant ways,  
Old songs and saws of fays, fiends, and the foam,  
And that old love our fathers felt for home,  
Where none now stay, for 'all roads lead to  
Rome.'

Farewell, my friend. You to the cities flee ;  
Leave me my Norman lass, and liberty."

Thus, thus, and thus my artist friend and I,  
In old art-student day, now long gone by.  
My Norman lassie's well enough to do ;  
Married the innkeeper, and quickly grew  
Quite coarse and fat. Nay, nay, the lass I knew  
Is dead—died with the visions of my youth,  
My faith in manly honour, woman's truth ;  
And that love-light which shone on sea and shore  
May shine for others still—for me no more.

## A FAIR TOXOPHILITE.

SPRUNG from lords of lineage mighty  
Is the heiress of the Hall;  
Artemis than Aphrodite  
Rather does her form recall;  
Not an æsthete thin and utter,  
Not a schoolroom bread-and-butter  
Miss, nor hoyden fast and flighty;  
But a stately maid and tall.

Tall and statuesque and stately,  
Walking with uplifted head  
Delicately and sedately—  
Mark the goddess in her tread!  
Hers no academic varnish  
Time or circumstance can tarnish,

But the gracious ease innately  
With our high-born damsels bred.

Ne'er, in marble, purer features  
Could the sculptor's eye entrance ;  
Looks more rich ne'er graced the creatures  
Of the poet-mind's romance ;  
'Neath its veil of silken lashes  
Melts the violet eye, or flashes,  
When upraised it is to meet yours  
With a full and fearless glance.

Watching her, her figure's graces  
Lightly clad in Lincoln green,  
Swift its course the memory traces  
Back to days that erst have been ;  
When to vie with archers' revel  
On the sward, smooth-swept and level,  
Dusky dames of Eastern races  
By the Caliph's eyes were seen.

Back to Tasso's courtly pages,  
Where we read Clorinda's name—  
Shootress who in fray engages  
Many a man of martial fame—  
Who, with lethal darts and gory,  
Hath her record writ in story,  
Slaying nobles, knights, and sages,  
Scorning all the meaner game.

Back to days when, busked with leather,  
That bold outlaw, Robin Hood,  
With the band he'd brought together,  
Stoutly held the good greenwode ;  
When he wooed and won that sweetest  
Maiden, Marion, the meetest  
Helpmeet that, through stormy weather,  
E'er at archer's elbow stood.

Never houri that hath haunted  
Trellised glades of Teheran ;

Never huntress Tasso chaunted  
As the poet only can ;  
Not Maid Marion in Sherwood  
Was more witching than in her wood  
Seems the lady here I've vaunted,  
Paramount of all our clan.

Dull the landscape grows, and hateful,  
O most fair toxophilite,  
When you leave me ; yet I'm grateful  
To be out of range and sight.  
Let the targe attest your daring,  
But, in mercy's sake, be sparing  
Of the darts, by far more fateful,  
From your eyes so deadly bright !

## A TRANSATLANTIC COUSIN.

'T WAS very well a bard should sing,  
And very true his song who sung,  
"A cousin is a dangerous thing ;"—  
I thought so once when I was young,  
I know it now I'm older.  
But never knew it till the days  
When, wandering with some western men,  
I studied lovely woman's ways  
Where, far beyond our British ken,  
Atlantic waves are bolder.

A year has passed—or three—or four?  
Love takes but little heed of time :  
The joy I felt, the grief I bore,  
Both came when June was at its prime,  
*One* perished ere September.

A season at a seaside town—  
Fate destined it was so to be—  
Has crowned my head with sorrow's crown,  
For all the life now left to me  
Is what I can remember.

I met her 'mid a ball-room's din ;—  
A form whose arms and neck were bare  
And jewelless, but roses twin  
Were blushing on her dusky hair,  
And happy roses nestled  
On bosom whiter than the white  
Soft filmy fabric that around  
Her floated in a cloud so light  
It hardly seemed to touch the ground—  
My heart, in vain we wrestled !

Outworks of wisdom soon were lost,  
Barriers of prudence broken through,

Reserve was out of window tost,  
And straight, my heart, I offered *you*  
Into her tender keeping.

Not then and there—for not a dance  
Unclaimed her tiny tablets showed,  
But from her eyes I stole a glance  
To light me on my homeward road,  
And quite prevent me sleeping.

The morrow came but to complete  
The task that night had well begun.  
Beneath the cliff I'd sought a seat  
To think of those at home with one  
Wide ocean spread between us.  
The morning's mails were in my hand,  
When as I read a shadow fell  
Upon the page, and lo! to land  
The sea had cast—I knew it well—  
Another sea-born Venus.



My beauty of last night, but oh !

The morning breeze had fanned her cheek  
Into a deeper, richer glow,

The sun had seen her eyes, and eke

A kiss thereon had printed

Her creamy draperies clung unto

Her every curve without a crease,  
Suggesting to my dazzled view

A marble goddess of old Greece

Most delicately tinted.

A canopy was spread on high

Of mystic, tender, violet blue,

Such colour as I thought the sky

Not elsewhere than at Naples knew

No wonder as we wandered

On such a day, through such a scene,

The old, old tale was told again : —

Heart-treasures at her feet, I ween,  
Were freely poured, but poured in vain—  
She laughed to see them squandered.

No, put the album out of sight,  
And make the poems into spills,  
Romance and I are parted quite ;—  
Louisas, Lotties, Lauras, Lils,  
I 've sung them by the dozen,  
But—ah ! here 's Baby for a kiss,  
And Ma to make of me a toff.  
Clean shirt—white tie—what means all this?  
“ You dine, sir, with the husband of  
Your Transatlantic Cousin.”

## KITTY.

“It was a comical little name, he thought, when spoken sentimentally.”—JULIAN STURGIS.

A GRACIOUS air, a winning smile,  
A walk and presence queenly—  
Pray bear with me a little while—  
My pen performs it meanly ;  
And yet the portrait would essay  
Of her whose footstep's light fall  
I hear trip past my door by day,  
Come in my dreams at nightfall.  
In every mood she's to be wooed,  
Gay, tender, wise, or witty,  
But don't—this counsel I'd intrude—  
Try sentiment with Kitty.

“Come, deftest of life-painting men,” \*  
Sang Beauty’s old-world singer,  
When on papyrus sought his pen,  
And sought in vain to bring her.  
“Come, paint for me that visage rare,  
Like which on earth here none beams ;  
Those soft dark tresses, gold-shot where  
They’ve caught and kept the sunbeams.  
Show how the merry dimples climb  
From chin to brow—banditti  
In ambush for your heart each time  
You win a smile from Kitty.

“And ’neath the halo of her hair,  
A polished ivory forehead  
Pray paint me, where not grief nor care  
Has traced its lines abhorred.  
And let her eyebrows neither meet,  
Nor far away be parted :

\* “*Ἄγε, ζωγράφων ἀριστε, κ.τ.λ.*”—ANACREON.

Twin bridges from beneath which fleet  
Eye-arrows forth are darted.  
With Aphrodité Artemis  
Came here from Love's own city,  
To kindle those star-lamps, I wis,  
That light the face of Kitty.

“A bouquet best her colouring shows  
Where rose and lily mingle :—  
The whitest lily, reddest rose,  
From all Art's treasures single.  
The region of her lips must be  
A land of pleasant places ;  
Men in her figure's grace must see  
The trinity of graces.  
An angel-woman at her prime ?  
Just so. And more's the pity  
No sentimental rhyme will chime  
In due accord with Kitty.”

Yon ancient Greek, I fear me much,  
My Muse hath much misquoted :—  
Mine ears Apollo ne'er did touch,  
Lips ne'er to sing devoted.  
My spirit-case contains no wine  
That's Chian called or Massic ;  
And Nathan of the triple sign  
Holds all my volumes classic.  
But ah ! that dream can radiance throw  
O'er chambers, grim and gritty,  
And—Pardon, I'm forgetting. No,  
No sentiment with Kitty !

A "FEW OF THEM."

A FEW of them—just three or four—  
That most of my friends must have met with,  
And some—no offence, I implore—  
Are possibly in the same set with.  
The end of the season comes on;  
We're counting our gains and our losses,  
And betting-books eagerly con  
With curses, or blessings, for "hosses."  
Then pardon the poet who sings  
In most unpoetical places,  
For he knows some peculiar things  
About people one meets at the races.  
  
My Lord—yes, I doff him my hat  
In respect for his wealth and his title;—

A nod—perhaps not even that—  
Is all that I get in requital.  
Not yet nine-and-twenty—or so  
The stud-book contains declaration—  
He's weary of life, and, I know,  
Seeks sport for a novel sensation ;  
Maybe some distraction it brings  
Denied him by knaves and by aces,  
For he's learned some peculiar things  
That never were taught at the races.

*Place aux dames !* Will the Countess descend ?  
What a treat such a darling to hand down  
From the coach, as I saw you, my friend,  
And envied you greatly, at Sandown !  
A face that to painters might be  
Their brightest ideal's reflection ;  
A form such as sculptors may see,  
And worship, in dreams of perfection ;



Soft hair in profusion of rings  
And curls, surely twined by the Graces ;  
You may count 'mid peculiar things  
This assortment to-day at the races.

But as I am pressing more near  
This beauty, "all eyes" to behold her,  
A mellow voice sounds in my ear,  
A glove's lightly laid on my shoulder.  
The Major, that model of men,  
Of half our young sportsmen the mentor,  
Who knows a good thing now and then,  
And of scandal's a skilful inventor !  
There's a certain aroma that clings  
To the man from malodorous cases  
He was mixed in ; but these are the things  
One forgets all about at the races.

"Me daughter"—and here the old rogue  
Introduces a charming new-comer,

With the 'slightest suspicion of brogue,  
And eyes like the Shannon in summer.  
Of accomplishments, all that prevail,  
A convent in Paris has taught her,  
And private theatricals fail  
Without Major What's-a-name's daughter.  
To-night a young peer at the wings,  
O'er a paper-bound booklet of Lacy's,  
May whisper some wonderful things  
He'd ne'er have revealed at the races.

In my smoke-wreaths I now can see all  
The past season, a pale panorama,  
And in front of the curtain I call  
The personages of the drama,  
From the runners who'd sell us a card  
To the noble (or otherwise) owners,  
From the girls who won gloves from the bard  
To the betting-men, mighty intoners,

From the tout to the plunger who flings

His coin till it spatters our faces—

They come, and I think of the things

I've heard of them all at the races.

## THE SUSSEX FORTNIGHT.

“GOODWOOD the glorious!”—so ’tis we speak of it,

When our selections have been the right sort ;—  
When, as too often, we’ve made a bad week of it—

“ Pshaw—garden-party—destructive to sport.”

Lunch on the drag of the Royal Sussexicans,

Lounge on the Lawn with Miss Chicky de Wing,  
Good wine galore, and of bad language lexicons

Hurled at our heads as we drew on the Ring.

Brighton the brave, with its breezes so tonic—Oh,

Don’t they bring freshness to crew of the Ship ?—  
Mutton’s where Brebant combines with Delmonico,

Hungry to satisfy, sated to flip—

Grand Stand, where Flora her loveliest lavishes—

Private enclosure the Upper Ten fill—

Bar, whereat nor the O’Turk nor McTavish is

Left to pine long for his national still.

Lewes, the "last train," as somebody's christened it,

Since by it backers have oft to get home,

Pleasantest of the three places, now isn't it?—

If lucky stars for us lighten the dome.

First day may frown—you can hope on the latter  
day

Fortune will burst into bounteous smiles.

So, to fresh fields railway-faring on Saturday,

Gaily we whist'll, with naps between whiles.

Farewell the Fortnight! Move on we, multivious,

"Routed" for Scotland, the Bads, or Bengal,

Certain, though cares and though creditors chivy us,

Sussex will see us at next bugle-call.

Thick in the gills I'm, and you're somewhat yellow,

Sis!

Well—we've ate, drunken, and bet with the best.

Memory, that of good horses, good fellows, is,

Leaves no fortnightmare to trouble our rest.

## DOWN THE ROAD.

## I.—TO THE DERBY.

ARE glasses all empty? Are weeds all a-light?

Old chappies, fall into your places.

Fall out of them, doubtless, you may before night

But tumble to this—you have now to sit tight

Till Jehu has landed his cargo all right

On the hill for a view of the races.

The ship is well buoyed with the usual crew:

Tom's home from a tropical climate;

Dick has turned up from Oxford, and looks rather

“blue,”

For Greats are at hand, and he *hopes* to pull  
through—

There's a family living, and, 'twixt me and you,

He's expected one day to be Primate.

And Capel's ceased thinking of "bulls" and of  
"bears,"

To give his great mind up to horses ;  
Fog's laid down the weight of his family cares,  
To burden his back with more sporting affairs :  
Farmer Bob's busy sorting the wheat from the tares  
In the tips sent from different sources.

Though the road has been shorn of its glory, no  
doubt,

Since the days older bards celebrated,  
Some amusement will keep us alive on the route,  
If our eyes on the vehicles look round about,  
From cart of the coster to slashing turn-out  
Of his Grace with its team neatly mated.

I' faith there is life, there is fun, in the scene,  
As the houses give way to the hedges,  
While, like pretty pictures in framework of green,  
Fair faces are peeping the branches between

Upon us who sail a free course and serene,  
Or are packed in the tightest of wedges.

As a school-house's portals are speedily past,  
Come the youngsters hurrahing and hooting!  
A roguish-eyed governess follows the last,  
And Tweedledum wakes up his horn with a blast  
That shows, if at Epsom he's out of his cast,  
He's a wonderful fellow at Tooting.

Look left and look right. Growl the pessimists  
may

That down the hill England's descending—  
By the spectacle that is before us to-day  
Of peers, peasants, peris of opera and play,  
Lords, ladies, and louts, a good part, one would  
say,  
Of England is up the hill wending.

For'ard on! For'ard on! with an infinite trust  
In fortune—and frequent revivers.



Foul weather or fair, winning, losing, we must  
Not ever lose heart, or let merriment rust,  
With a laugh for the rain that is laying the dust,  
And the men who are laying the fivers.

---

## II.—To Ascot.

MID-SEASON now is at its height,  
And spirits should be at their highest.  
None under proof upon our roof  
Thou 'lt find, my friend, where'er thou tryest.  
Our men and horses both are right ;  
Our ladies quite the Road's delight.

South Western, we will not essay  
Thy long campaign, so oft repented ;  
Nor struggle through, O Waterloo,  
Thy crowds, well coated, ill-contented.  
A better, jollier, livelier way  
Our fathers went. We go as they.

A "change" team forward on the road ;  
A well-hung coach, well-victualled villa ;  
A winning book, a skilful cook ;  
Stores from Havannah and Manilla ;  
Wines that from vineyards choice have flowed ;—  
'Tis thus White Monday's *menu's* showed.

Then going down there's lots of fun.

Soon silver tongues begin to tinkle—  
The clothes they've brought—with ne'er a  
thought

Of rain—or, maybe, "just a sprinkle."  
Our bets you'd think already won,  
And still unrealed the race of dun.

Now up a hill, now down a dale—

Now thundering through a straggling village,  
Where children shout, and "whirlabout,"

And pilgrims of their coppers pillage.  
Anon some friendly crew we hail—  
"To-morrow—lunch—you will not fail."

'Mid country scents that fill the air,  
Of lilacs', hawthorns', roses' giving,  
This quiet tool past meadows cool,  
A bit of life is worth the living ;  
While dresses' *frou-frou* proves our fair  
Companions near our joy to share.

High over yon dark belt of wood  
The grey and weather-beaten Castle  
Uprears its head, as though it said  
A welcome to each loyal vassal,  
Whose sires in line, true men and good,  
To guard the flag it flies have stood.

Tree-bosomed in a woodland street,  
'Mid tall-trunked elms, wide-spreading beeches,  
Ancestral oaks, a chimney smokes—  
Its harbour there our cargo reaches.  
A cosy nook, and, omen meet !  
Its owners call it "The Retreat."

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O Royal Ascot ! thou hast tried

The strength of many a bard's composure—  
Procession, band, pavilion, stand,

The beauties penned in thine enclosure,  
The wagers pencilled—they deride  
The bard whose desk's a coach-inside.

## JO.

HE lives among you ; day by day  
You see his wan and pallid face,  
His naked feet that wend their way  
With aches and pain in every pace.

You pass, on daily business bound,  
The crossing where his trade he plies,  
And with indifference profound  
You read starvation in his eyes.

A life-existence passing strange  
Is his—to see the world go by,  
And sweep a path for those who range  
From grave to gay, from low to high ;

For Dr. Trimman's reverend toes  
His task it is to save from soil,

And eke Miss Lightfoot's silken hose  
When hastening to dramatic toil.

The tale that Dickens told in prose  
Outsoars a feeble singer's rhyme ;  
Yet think you that we have not Jo's  
Successor in this present time ?

"The poor ye have"—you know the rest—  
And they who loudest pray and preach  
Will show more apostolic zest  
When boys like this their aid shall reach.

All faith and all belief without,  
This starveling neither knows nor fears,  
Or God or Devil ;—though, no doubt,  
The latter's name he often hears.

No memories past, no future trust,  
Relieve his life's dull monotone ;  
The winter's mud, the summer's dust,  
Are all the seasons he has known.

The trees and flowers, the trellised bowers,  
To him are names—not even that.  
Alike the cold and sunny hours  
Beat fierce on one without a hat.

The green of spring, or autumn's brown,  
In him no sentiments arouse.  
His dream of fortune's half a crown,  
Of Heaven—perhaps a public-house.

The evening-tide, that brings the dew  
To renovate the herbs and grass,  
To him brings nothing sweet or new.  
But ah ! such scenes—we'll let them pass.

And he is here—and in our midst—  
He—aye, and many thousand such.  
Mercy, as in old days thou didst,  
Extend a hand that he may touch !

But stay, my pen. And, readers kind,  
Who deem this moralizing long,

- Forgive the singer if you find  
A sermon where you sought a song.

\* \* \* \* \*

And is it all a fleeting dream,  
Creation of an artist's brain?  
Jo's dead long since. Yet did he seem,  
Methought, to-night to live again—

•  
Live doubly. In the novelist's page  
His death drew tears from you, from me,  
From all. And here upon the stage  
He comes to life in Jennie Lee.



*AT THE PANTOMIME.*

As I'm slowly descending the valley of years,  
And pleasure's beginning to cloy,  
There's one entertainment which evermore cheers  
Me the same as it did when a boy.  
I care not for tragedy's stilted ways;  
There are heights an old man cannot climb;—  
But the Clown can amuse and the exquisite Fays  
Still charm me in thee, Pantomime!

While decade on decade rolls lazily by,  
I am true to my post in the stalls,  
With the smile on my lip and the tear in my eye  
That the song or the sentiment calls;—  
For pathos will often lie under the fun;  
From ridiculous unto sublime

Is but a short space—I can clear it in one  
Little leap when I watch Pantomime.

“Old Drury” hath charms for us elderly folks  
That the youngsters can scarce understand,  
For, while scanning the quaint evolutions of Vokes,  
We stray into Memory’s land.

Comes the maiden with eyes that are blue as her  
sash,

Comes the comrade beloved of our prime,  
But the music dismisses them both with a crash,  
And we’re lost in thy maze, Pantomime !

With Sinbad the Sailor I traverse the seas ;  
Little Williams and Leslie and Rose  
Bring me down, metaphorically, on to my knees,  
No doubt an undignified pose.

In the Diamond Valley I wander galore,  
Forgetful that thieving’s a crime ;  
And if any one whispers that life is a bore,  
I yell in his ears—Pantomime !

And then there's Red Riding Hood, alway my first,  
As she was my earliest, pet ;  
With emotion my heart-strings are likely to burst  
When I watch her adventures e'en yet.  
And Little Boy Blue, as he blows up his horn,  
Blows away all the dust and the grime  
From my uppermost story ;—in fact, I am born  
Afresh when I see Pantomime.

Then over the water Aladdin hath woo'd  
Me to follow his Wonderful Lamp ;  
His career to the eye and the mind affords food—  
I' faith 't was a lucky young scamp.  
Cinderella I've seen, "Beauty" seen and "The  
Beast,"

And much that I've seen will not rhyme,  
But I really have had a most excellent feast  
At the board where presides Pantomime.

I like the whole thing, the fuss, flurry and noise,  
Harlequin and the fair Columbine,

'The baker, the butcher, the newspaper boys,

The publican spilling the wine.

"Vanitas Vanitatum"'s the song that, forsooth,

Sings the sage, but it may be that I'm

Not the only old fool who's renewing his youth

With a taste of thy sweets, Pantomime.

## PICTURES IN WINE-COLOURS.

## I. CHAMPAGNE.

So, my golden-capped friend, you have found me  
Where the lamp, trimmed and bright,  
Makes an island of light

'Mid the ocean of darkness around me,  
Extending to left and to right.

Scarce seen are the portraits ancestral  
Through the shadow that palls  
Dame and knight on the walls—

My lady caressing her kestrel,  
My lord to his falcon who calls.

But the pictures are plain in this amber,  
Clear mirror of mine,  
Where two brightest eyes shine,

While laugh Amorini that clamber  
Round lips that are luscious as wine.

A free lance intent upon plunder?  
A saucy soubrette  
In a comedy set?  
Or is it Veuve Clicquot, I wonder,  
In the old days, unwidowed as yet?

Ha ! that bubble—it flew like an arrow.  
’T was a ball upward shied,  
And myself I descried  
On a drag at the Eton and Harrow  
With my love (of a day) by my side.

Now that clink of the glass my composure  
Has spoiled, for it brought—  
So wine-wonders are wrought—  
Sound of saddling-bell, heard in enclosure  
At Ascot, to ears of my thought.

Changed the scene. In the diamond-sprayed eddies  
That whirl in the glass,  
Waltzing forms seem to pass,  
And mine's the arm surely that steadies  
The steps of that light-footed lass.

O wines of Champagne, pure and mellow,  
Grace let me implore  
From Carte Blanche and Carte d'Or,  
While from Monopole and Montebello  
Libations to Bacchus I pour !

Nor shall shades of oblivion darkle  
O'er his name, to whose ghost  
Viveurs all would play host—  
Who first taught the grape's eye to sparkle—  
Dom Perignon,\* champagne-drinkers' toast.

\* It may not be generally known that Dom Perignon, who presided over the Benedictine vineyards in 1670, was the first producer on record of effervescing wines.

You've charmed me from out my seclusion,  
My golden-capped friend,  
By those pictures you blend  
In my glass of fun, folly, profusion,  
Whereat pensive quiet must end.

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## II. SHERRY.

"CLUB close by—a glass of sherry"—  
"Hotel handy—wet your lips"—  
Strange how mingle memories, very  
Precious, with the glass one sips—  
Precious, yet in some part ruthless,  
Of the days when we were youthful,  
Like the vintage that Divine  
Deemed we as, O friend of mine,  
Ne'er since seemed maturer wine.

Comes the comrade, tried and trusted—  
Though the sharp blade of his wit



Long in mouldy sheath hath rusted ;

Oh, the flash, the play of it !

Then we chest nor papers padded,

Nor to wine wished bitters added

Ere the feast, Lucullus' awe,

Wherein lawless sons of law

Nectar and ambrosia saw.

Now that health's a leading question,

Lore of liquids we amass—

Keep one eye upon digestion,

While the other's on the glass—

Hold to light the Manzanillas,

'Montillados and Montillas—

View alike with critic frown

Samples pale from Cadiz town,

And the smooth East India brown.

Once 't was otherwise. Those merry

Days we wandered in the South

Come back with the kiss of sherry  
    Lightly laid upon the mouth.  
Nice's joys—near Cap Mont Boro  
Drank we not true vino d'oro  
    In that auberge, grey and old,  
    Vowing that each drop of gold  
    Worthier was than wealth untold ?

Sunny Spain ! Tower, vineyard, altar,  
    Forms mantilla'd in the street !  
From Irun unto Gibraltar  
    Wondrous churches, wine, and feet !  
From sunrise to shadow-falling,  
Sights that history seemed recalling—  
    Cities where stout siege hath been,  
    Sunk armadas, closèd een,  
    All in magic wineglass seen.

Fade too soon the shapes wine-bidden  
    When the glass stands empty there ;

Now the picture's once more hidden  
By a prosy London square,  
And I dwell 'mid "slow-pate thinkers,  
Sad, marsh-dwelling, porter-drinkers,'  
As the Spanish don defines  
(Since on us no clear sun shines)  
Buyers of his choicest wines.

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### III. BURGUNDY.

"HALT!" And for that sudden stand  
What excuse had been invented,  
Marvelled the Rhine-seeking band,  
Who, obedient to command,  
Halted there and arms presented.

Little did those warriors know  
Thoughts their colonel's fancy feeding,

When he bade them halt and show  
To the vineyard, Clos Vougeot,  
Outward homage ere proceeding.

Home, where grew his favourite wine,  
Strangely turned that Marshal stoic  
From the fighting on the Rhine,  
And the cross he 'd hoped would shine  
On his breast for deed heroic.

Clos Vougeot ! Regrets are vain !  
Yet there 's something here entices  
Thought from plunder and campaign  
To the city on the Seine,  
All her charms and all her vices.

Not to merry Lycée times,  
Times of café and casino,  
When life moved to natural rhymes,  
And he heard the midnight chimes,  
With Mathilde in rough merino.

Not to hours when sharp ping-pang  
Spoke of gun-shots—hits or misses;  
When the bugle blew "*au rang*,"  
And the fierce oath, "*feu et sang*,"  
Rose to lips yet moist with kisses.

But to stately day and night,  
And the dark eyes of the Duchess,  
Than this wine more softly bright,  
And her velvet lips as light  
On his own as Volnay's touches.

*En avant!* The dream is o'er:—  
Monsieur l'Amant, cease to dally  
With love-raptures, left a score  
Years behind you, while before,  
One day's distance, foemen rally.

Do not all of us who 've sung  
Our "*Dum vivimus vivamus*"

Feel from out our memories wrung  
Scenes and sounds by some among  
Wines that make the Côte d'Or famous?

Bourgogne ! Subtle, suave, refined  
Bouquet and finesse and flavour !  
Where, O Wisdom, are combined  
Trinity like this, the kind  
Crowning grace of Bacchus' favour?

RIVERSIDE RHYMES.





## THE RIVERSIDE SEASON.

By signs and by tokens a hundred—a thousand—

Who runneth may read in the riverside realms ;

By boats shooting past us with Youth at their  
prows, and

With Pleasure's fair fingers directing their helms ;

By business more busy, more leisurely leisure,

More pace in the stroke and more point in the  
pun ;

By shedding of vine's blood and visitors' treasure ;—

We know that the riverside season 's begun.

By skiffs, and by gigs, and by punts, and by  
launches,

That are puffed, or are poled, or, compelled of  
oar, glide,

Their cargo consisting of sirloins and haunches,  
And hampers, fit freight for a gay Whitsun tide ;  
By the sun shining in the soft blue, while the  
distant

Low hills catch the shadows that fall, one by  
one ;

By the voices of girls on aquatics insistent ;—  
We know that the riverside season 's begun.

By couples discovered in shady recesses  
(It 's strange how they came there—the boat  
knew the way) ;

By glimpses through leaves of the latest lawn  
dresses ;

By echoes through lace of the last boudoir lay ;  
By flowers on the bank in their summer apparel—  
The lilacs and lilies that sewed not nor spun ;  
By the beer every night running short in the  
barrel ;—

We know that the riverside season 's begun.

Up and down—up at Oxford by eights on the Isis,  
The gloom of bumpees and of bumpers the  
glow ;

Down below Molesey Lock, where the verdure  
entices,

By the ices on aits, quite as varied a show ;  
By picnics where “two” quote from Suckling and  
Sedley,

Till Mamma says the “joint” affair ’s quite  
overdone ;

By things and by thoughts whereof here is a med-  
ley ;—

We know that the riverside season ’s begun.

## A SONG OF YESTERDAY.

“Hier j’étais à table avec ma chère belle.”—GAUTIER.

Was it yesterday? Well, if we like we shall say so.

’Tis better by far to be merry than wise;  
And when the heart’s young the year’s always in  
May, so

Why carefully count every moment that flies?  
That dainty repast was my portion but lately,  
I know, for I hear still the chansonette gay  
She sang with the delicate charm that innately  
Belonged to *ma belle* by the river in May.

O my lovely beloved—but I feel an intruder,  
When on Gautier’s rights I presume to intrench,  
For what sounds in English than compliment ruder  
Has quite a society flavour in French.

I'll therefore refrain from all spoony addresses,  
The knife and the fork with more freedom to play,  
For the lightest of girls cannot live on caresses,  
And the hunger-weed grows by the river in May.

You know the old inn by all lovers frequented,  
Of homely and old-fashioned riverside cheer ;  
With lilac and hawthorn the air sweetly scented,  
And vocal with oaths of bargees over beer :  
And the snug private room where with hand in  
your Mabel's  
(Or Milly's or Maud's) you can gaze far away  
On the wide-spanning bridge, the red tiles, and the  
gables—  
A picturesque group by the river in May.

But, if yours, O my comrade, to mine a like case  
was,  
You'd have tired of a far-away prospect, though  
fair,

And turned to where close by your elbow a face  
was—

And wondered, of course, how the deuce it got  
there.

Soft lace falling back from an arm fully rounded,

Soft eyes looking all that the lips dare not say—

It's funny that curious things are confounded

With a *tête-à-tête* feast by the river in May.

Then a bright ray of sunshine, the first of the  
Springtime

(Time was Spring existed elsewhere than in verse

And live lovers prattled of love-knots and ring-time,

Instead of bronchitis—hers better, his worse),

Shot gleams of pure gold in the glossy and crowded

Brown ripples of hair on her forehead that lay,

And drove off the shadows her brow that had  
clouded—

She'd feared it might rain by the river in May.

---

From Life's business an interlude this that's abided,  
While events of more moment have melted to  
nought :—

I thank thee, O Théophile, that thou hast guided  
My mind up those pleasant backwaters of thought.  
Though heartache, and trouble, and toil may await us  
In yonder black city at no distant day,  
What matter so long as the gods compensate us  
With warmth, wine, and love by the river in May.

## A BANK HOLIDAY.

WHEN St. Lubbock's fête-day festive  
Dawns, and Cockney minds are restive  
To roam forth, decked in their best (if  
Such they boast), by file and rank ;  
Then I leave my N.'s or M.'s side  
For an older love, fair Thames'-side,  
And I stretch me, till they fetch me, on the bank.

At its brightest in young summer,  
Smiles the stream on every comer,  
From the City—minstrel, mummer,  
Noble Marquis, Mr. Blank—  
As along that mighty roadway,  
Pulled by oars, by ponies towed, way  
Are they making, echoes waking on the bank.



Down the stream a launch here charges,  
Screaming scorn at laggard barges ;  
On the deck bright eyes from Clarges  
Street stare in amazement frank  
At that wonderful and fearful  
Get-ups 'board the boats that steer, full  
Of East-enders, towards drink-vendors on the bank.

Here 's the parson (where 's his choker ?)  
Who last night was such a croker ;  
Here the lawyer, banker, broker ;  
Here their clerks, in craft more crank !  
All the scene, so swift it changes,  
And from pride to meanness ranges,  
Seems a sham, a panorama, from the bank.

Skim the skiffs along like swallows ;  
These the state-barge swan-like follows—  
Mark-lane Plutos, Mart Apollos,  
Stepped this morn across her plank.

Venuses from Clapham Common,  
Phrynes (ask me not where from), on  
Thames's ample breast you sample from the bank.

Sinks the sun—the scene's scarce duller.  
Here's a snowy-flannelled sculler;  
Quite a charming bit of colour  
Full against the foliage dank,  
Where they've landed, shows a crew of  
Sweet girl-athletes we've a view of,  
As we're dreaming, sleepful seeming, on the bank.

Idealized yon bridge's stonework  
Till it seems the fairies' own work—  
For light touches they alone work  
We have evening shades to thank.  
O'er our closed eyes Memory's stealing,  
Past riparian scenes revealing,  
Hid whose vistas Time's white mist has from the  
bank.

## UP A BACKWATER.

THE picnic, at length it was over,  
Fizz and questions were popped,  
Hints and handkerchiefs dropped,  
With some lines about "clover" and "Dover"  
Which somebody's chaperon stopped.

We most of us surely remember  
Some similar scene,  
As occurring between  
The months, say, of March and September,  
When we, like the salad, were green.

The tablecloth held down by pebbles ;  
The exquisite fare,  
And fair exquisites there ;  
The chorus of *bassi* and trebles  
Which frightened the birds in the air !

But now, as I said, it was over,  
And nobody knew  
That a damsel in blue,  
Not *quite* by herself, was a rover  
In a craft to accommodate two.

Smooth, dreamy, delicious the motion  
As they glided along,  
With a rhythm-like song  
(And neither, of course, had a notion  
That either meant anything wrong),

To a backwater sun ne'er invaded—  
An aquatic side-street,  
Over which the boughs meet;  
Where others have loitered, as they did,  
And found the seclusion was sweet.

From clouds that curl round his manilla  
An aerial estate  
Can his fancy create—

A lawn, and a riverside villa,  
And a damsel in blue for his fate.

O, the villa his vision discloses,  
Wide-porched, creeper-clad !  
Many such can be had  
On the Thames in the season of roses,  
At rentals to make a man sad.

He laughs as if joy were immortal ;  
And who'd prophesy  
How a change in the sky,  
Making Poverty peep through the portal,  
Makes Love through the window to fly ?

The dream was so sweet ! 'Twas a pity  
Both forgot for the day,  
In their innocent way,  
Belle'd accepted a " Bull " in the City  
Fred hadn't a franc but his pay.

But I know when I nursed him through fever  
Up at drear Dustypore,  
How he'd rave, and implore  
One word from his "darling deceiver,"  
And pray to behold her once more.

And I know 'neath her silks and her laces,  
And "cloud" of soft wool,  
On a heart, of love full,  
Lies a locket in which there a face is  
That bears no resemblance to Bull.

## THE OLD RIVERSIDER.

THE stream, broad and brown, floweth lazily here ;  
Like laggards creep past us the barges ;  
And the public hard by with most excellent beer  
To man its whole duty discharges.  
Here you've met him a dozen times, doubtless, or  
more,  
A Law, Church, and tap-room abider ;  
And you'll own there's scarce need to apologise for  
This rhyme of an old riversider.

His voice has a tone of dogmatic command,  
Like the axe and tongue wielder's at Hawarden :  
Ne'er parson supported with lips and with hand  
More firmly a faithful churchwarden :  
The Conservative party has not in its ranks  
Of changes more steadfast a chider,

“As you were” both in Parliament and on the  
banks

Being creed of the old riversider.

He’s an oracle ripe of riparian lore,

Though his facts are based sometimes on fiction;  
As to points of dispute from the Springs to the  
Nore

He scarcely will brook contradiction.

Be the craft what she may, whencesoever she hail,

He’ll tell you, the moment he’s eyed her,  
Who built and who owns her, and not often fail  
To find fault will the old riversider.

Each weir and backwater he knows and each ait,

All the currents and eddies and surges.

If out of his depth he appear, only wait,

And see how to land he emerges.

He’ll show how in seventeen seventy-five,

What occurred proves his knowledge the wider ;



---

And, since to gainsay him there's no one alive,  
Victory rests with the old riversider.

You surmise that he's dwelt always where he now  
dwells?

The line of his lips he'll unravel,  
And smile a slow smile of contempt as he tells  
You he's seen in his time foreign travel.  
From the Thames sixteen years since he went to  
the Seine,  
Where they showed him the "Grand Duchesse"  
Schneider,—

And to talk of more recent stage-beauties is vain—  
She captured that old riversider.

He's affable though he's so wondrously wise,  
Your tap he's aye ready to sample;  
For in face of the temperance ranters he flies  
On wings less of words than example.

Though a bit of a humbug, of course, in his way,  
And of common sense oft a derider,  
He's a type that we're fond of, and few but will  
say  
Something kind of the old riversider.

*A RIVERSIDE ROSE.*

THE first of the month, when of posies  
Poets, nurses and nurserymen croon—  
A turned-down page of life it discloses,  
Where pictured (to fade away soon?)  
Amid memories of walks and of rows is  
A Rose by the river in June.

Behind her, the house weather-fretted  
To softest and deepest of greys,  
Doors, casements, and balconies netted  
With ivy and evergreen sprays,  
Wherein she 'd been trained and been petted  
Through her budtime of earlier days—

Before her, the stream, lightly fluttered  
By kiss of perfume-bearing breeze,

Or by messages song-birds have muttered  
As sent by the sentinel trees,  
Wherethrough, as through window half-shuttered,  
I watched my June-Rose at mine ease—

In beauty's full consciousness queenly,  
Her loose flowing garments of white  
Gathered up in one hand, she serenely  
Stood there within range of my sight,  
And I gazed—you perhaps will say meanly,  
But gazing was surely my right?

Of no headgear's or sunshade's protection  
There was need in my Rose's behoof;—  
An open-air flower, her perfection  
Owed nothing to stove or to roof;—  
And she boasted a heart and complexion  
Against weather or compliments proof.

Then followed the rows and the rambles—  
For love social barriers scorns—

And the picnics that often were scrambles,  
The dilemmas with ludicrous horns—  
How she laughed when she caught in the brambles,  
Saying "Roses were ne'er without thorns."

'T was in vain that I vowed and endeavoured  
To coax, to cajole, or to scold,  
Since she laughingly swore that she never 'd  
Be under the market-price sold—  
From the parent-tree when she was severed  
The knife must be purest of gold.

So I turn o'er the pages with quickness  
Of this "leafy" month;—as a boon  
I regard the trees' gathering thickness,  
Whereby hid is my face from the noon,  
Lest you read there my cause of heart-sickness  
Arose by the river in June.

## OLD HENLEY DAYS.

## I.

OLD anniversaries come round.

Fewer each year in flesh are found

Old friends, whose memory we'd keep green

In sylvan or riparian scene.

Old names give back no answering sound

Where once their echoes would have been.

Old bats have left their wonted ground,

Old oars been laid elm boards between,

And quavering are the notes we raise

To sing of dear old Henley days.

The little house that stood alone,

Built part of wood and part of stone,

Half hidden by a wealth of leaves,

Quaint with its overhanging eaves,

And unexpected gables thrown  
Out as by chance, to-day receives  
New guests in rooms we called our own ;—  
And still the creeping foliage weaves  
Its crown of blossoms, buds and sprays  
As in the dear old Henley days.

## II.

Henley? You laugh. The name can bring  
You scarce a thought, save of the swing  
Of rival crews—the show of dress—  
The chaff with gipsy sorceress—  
Girls, birds and niggers that would sing—  
Suns that would warm a golden tress—  
And life and light o'er everything,  
And words that only joy express,  
While whispering breezes seem to phrase  
Delights of dear old Henley days.

But, with a pluvial Jove on high,  
With bodies wet while throats were dry,  
Both girls and birds forgot their mirth,  
And niggers wished were 'neath the earth,  
And gipsy sorceress in a lie  
Was caught ere scarce her tale had birth,  
While spoiled was dress that *you*'d to buy  
Or from La Ferrière or from Worth,  
And ill luck took the tune from "lays"  
You wrote on dear old Henley days.

## III.

Away from race and dance and song  
My memory wanders, lingering long  
Where, near the humble house my care's  
Described, a girlish figure fares  
'Mid quaint-cut beds that blossoms throng,  
Minute triangles, tiny squares,



And diamond shapes that seem gone wrong  
 Till each the other's fault repairs.  
 The figure vanishes—a haze  
 Steals o'er the dear old Henley days.

They're artificial roses now  
 That grace that damsel's cheek and brow,  
 What time her clear contralto thrills  
 An audience far from Chiltern hills;  
 And, when yon garden heard my vow,  
 Thence sprung my source of many ills.  
 Your tale? Ah, yes. We none somehow  
 Can light our pipes without our spills.  
 'Twas Pater (that's the man who pays)  
 Who dubbed as "dear" old Henley days.

## MY LADY COQUETTE.

A TRUE daughter of Thames-land, a British Undine,  
Oh, how rhythmic the flow of her garments of green,  
As she stood on the bank—was it ages ago,  
Or only of weeks half a dozen or so?—  
And welcomed the crew she had summoned to land,  
Obedient slaves of her slightest command;—  
And the look in her eyes I can never forget—  
Oh, those marvellous eyes of my Lady Coquette!

Then the house with its furniture, quaintly select—  
Such surroundings as for such a queen you'd  
expect—

The blossoms, without and within, that made gay  
With colour and perfume the casements each day—

The ancient oak screen that so nearly was tall  
Enough quite to hide from us the old panelled wall,  
And the deep rugs whereon her feet often were set—  
Oh, those tiny arched feet of my Lady Coquette!

And the fan which she lightly' would wave o'er my  
brow—

I perceive its soft sandal-wood essences now—  
And the Cupids that flew o'er its surface of blue,  
I can now see the wing between me, sir, and you—  
And the scent of wood violets round us I trace,  
That came from her cobwebby kerchief of lace—  
And I hear her call some one—the pug or me?—  
“pet”—

Oh, those myriad wiles of my Lady Coquette!

Hark, the lilt of the skylark is clear on the air,  
As the day when I wooed her up river to fare—  
And never I make for that alder-arched creek,  
But I see her—the delicate bloom on her cheek,

And the blue depths of unfathomed lakes in her eyes,  
And her lips half apart with a smile of surprise,  
And her ivory teeth and her eyebrows of jet—  
Oh, those eyebrows and teeth of my Lady Coquette !

Those, who spread them, at last may be caught in  
a net ;—

And, the last time I met with my Lady Coquette,  
There were tears in her eyes not of anger alone,  
Which showed Venus victrix her victor must own :—  
For the tones of his voice when he handed her cloak  
Were as cool as were hers when my *congé* she spoke,  
And, since through her life she'd made others to  
fret—

Oh, the bitter heart-pangs of my Lady Coquette !

## UNDER HURLINGHAM TREES.

HERE always a cool, shady place is,  
Whatever the glare and the heat ;  
And here, in a welcome oasis  
'Mid the social Sahara, we'd meet,  
Once in ten days at first—then, fortnightly.  
Your engagements were many, and so  
Other ties made you, wrongly or rightly,  
Drop a riverside beau.

Here you'd come in your silk or your satin,  
“A goddess one knew from her gait”  
(Pray forgive the old versè-tag of Latin),  
With lips and with eyelids sedate—  
Or sometimes in *ingénue* linen,  
With the scarf, lightly tossed by the breeze,

'T was my fortune to once fix a pin in  
Under Hurlingham trees.

Will your form from my mind e'er be blotted,  
As you sat by the bank's verdant edge,  
And prattled of fields primrose-dotted,  
Bloom of orchards, and buds on the hedge?  
Once more near a maiden I dangled  
(In thought), youth and freshness her charm,  
Who for minnows and compliments angled  
Up at Sweetwater Farm.

Thus to be with me, *sola cum solo*,  
You, sweet hypocrite, swore you preferred  
To the field all a-frolic with polo,  
Whence voices and laughter were heard.  
From the shouts as a couple collided,  
Or a pony said prayers on its knees,  
We by curtains of leaves were divided  
Under Hurlingham trees.

From Ascot, the crown of its glory,  
To Goodwood, the fringe of its robe,  
Sank the season:—and one day my story  
I told, so your heart I might probe.  
As bends on its stalk a fair lily,  
Your fair head for a minute was bent,  
While you whispered: “We both have been silly  
But nothing was meant.”

A gentle “Good-bye”—no heart-burning.  
My furlough is up, and your spouse,  
From a tour round the world just returning,  
Has wired you must meet him at Cowes.  
But, since the place cool is and shady,  
Next season, if seek me you please,  
I’ll be found with some *new* married lady  
Under Hurlingham trees.

## AUGUST UP THE RIVER.

BRIGHT Summer's at her evening now  
A rich deep brown's upon her brow,  
Of lily whiteness scarce a trace  
Remaining, that was seen to grace

Her May of maiden beauties.

The corn-fields, spread on either hand,  
Ripe almost to the harvest stand ;  
Of boughs, that in the orchard bend  
Across the path, from end to end

Each shadow hung with fruit is.

Bright Summer's eve—eve of the day.  
Soft breezes round the mansion play—  
House mellowed with the year's slow growth  
That Time's touched tenderly, as loth  
One ruddy brick to wither.



The moon her altar-cloth of white  
Outspreads, as mortals she'd invite  
To sacrament;—and stars, Annette,  
Like lamps in highest Heaven are set,  
As though to light us thither.

Pshaw—solemn thoughts! And scarce the thing  
Made you refuse to play or sing,  
And with some fluffy wrapper round  
Your head, so punctually be found  
At tryst in place secluded.  
From ankle, trim and taut, you raise  
Your skirt, like maid of Dibdin's lays,  
Who'd scarce have run so fast and far  
To meet a mere freshwater tar  
As, naughty darling, you did.

Your hand—from 'neath the boughs we glide.  
What memories rise on every side  
Of gloves you won at rowing match,

Of fish you caught, or hope to catch,  
Of steam launch jubilations!  
Would we through life could journey, dear,  
Thus, I to work and you to steer,  
Sole tenants of our common mind  
Thoughts of a pleasant Past combined  
With sweet anticipations.

A FRAGMENT.

*(Found floating on the stream.)*

“WOMEN all are flirts you say, sir :

’T is their nature to be so.

Who are you to point the way, sir,

That we women ought to go ?

Think you that we hold so cheaply

All to womankind most dear ?

’T is but that we see too deeply

Much you would n’t have appear.

“Do we seem to hover gaily

Now o’er frond and now o’er fruit ?

Well you know, sir, that you daily

Are engaged in our pursuit.

In supreme conceit you reckon  
That, so potent are your charms,  
You have but to smile and beckon—  
Lo, we flutter to your arms!

“You can calculate concisely  
Just how far the game to play  
May be safe:—and then so nicely  
Make your bow and go your way.  
Girlhood is a bright and gay thing,  
Striving all your tastes to please:—  
Think you, therefore, it’s a plaything  
You can toy with at your ease?

“Girlhood has its aspirations;  
And they soar, sir, far above  
All your puny protestations,  
And your poor pretence of love.  
Girls have read in tale and poem  
How true hearts are truly earned.

Let man prove his worth ; they'll show him  
All he gives can be returned.

“ Women all are flirts you say, sir,  
    *Men*-flirts may exist as well ;  
And in woman's eyes they're baser  
    Things than tongue has words to tell.  
Though you come with vows most fervent,  
    Speeches fair and offerings fine,  
Still I say : ‘ Kind sir, your servant  
    Begs—most humbly—to decline.’ ”

\* \* \* \* \*

Hem—not strange he should have tossed it  
    From him like a bitter weed.  
Here it lies—she has n't crossed it,  
    And the check is plain to read.  
It may be that such-like dashers  
    On cream-laid in violet ink,  
Would mash up the breed of mashers,  
    Taken often—what d' you think ?

## ANDANTE PASTORALE.

Βωκολιάσδεο, Δάφνι· τὸ δ' ὠδᾶς ἄρχεο πρᾶτος,  
 Ὡιδᾶς ἄρχεο πρᾶτος, ἐφεψάσθω δὲ Μενάλκας.

*Scene—A Meadow near Henley.*

## DAPHNIS.

O, SWEET the scent of summer ripe, the taste of  
 cheese and salad!

O, sweet the puffing of my pipe, the burden of  
 my ballad!

In house-boat here no more about the tropic heat  
 diurnal

I reckon, than Sal, on "Sunday out" reckons warning  
 grandmaternal.

## MENALCAS.

London's the parent that I own. My cell's in  
 Piccadilly.

My wallet holds a devilled bone. My staff's a  
chestnut filly.

With air-proof rooms, of winter's rime the advent,  
cold and ruthless,

Concerns me much as nutting-time does persons  
who are toothless.

## DAPHNIS.

I've seen my love but once, and happier I not to  
have seen her.

She came and let the river lap her feet, with shy  
demeanour,

Uncourting gaze of curious men, nor dreamed where  
I was hidden.

O, surely, had I spoken then, speech had not been  
forbidden !

## MENALCAS.

I've known my love for years, and I am poorer  
for the knowing.

Last night I called and thought I'd try indifference,  
care bestowing

On other folk out of her ken, until she called me  
closer.

O, surely, had I spoken then, the answer'd not  
been "No, sir!"

DAPHNIS.

I'll buy my lass a milking-pail to silvern brightness  
burnished,

A cottage somewhere in the vale that's papered,  
tiled, and furnished;

A gown of silk that's simply neat with crimson  
flowers and green stalks;—

And then, mayhap, one morn, we'll meet with  
Love among the beanstalks.

MENALCAS.

I'll buy my queen gems to outshine those of the  
*haute cocotterie*,

A rope of pearls, a silver-mine, shares in the Frank-  
fort lottery;

And then between a waltz and ice, at one of next  
week's crushes,



She may say, "Yes, it would be nice," with no pretence of blushes.

## DAPHNIS.

'T was early morn. Above the stream she bent  
with charming gesture,

So close the water touched the cream-white edging  
of her vesture.

A flower from out her bosom's fold fell—floated  
towards me slowly.

I grasped it, and henceforth shall hold it as a  
treasure holy.

## MENALCAS.

'T was late at night. She lay at ease on couch  
she seldom quitted.

Enter a maid: "If madame please, her costume  
to be fitted.'

She rose in haste. A slipper slipped she paused  
not to recover.

Ere she returned, away had tripped her *bottine* and  
her lover

## DAPHNIS.

I placed my flower within the cup I won at last  
year's races.

Mèthinks its golden eye lights up with unaccus-  
tomed graces

My cabin, and upon the shelf, among the pipes  
and trophies,

I seem to see my Lyda's selt. In love man such  
an oaf is,

## MENALCAS,

My slipper's fixed upon the wall, hung round with  
lace discreetly—

Not for the vulgar gaze of all its outline's shaped  
so sweetly;

And there it holds my cigarettes—your shepherd's  
pipe I blow not.

New sweetness have my perfumed pets; but whence  
my comrades know not.

DAPHNIS.

O innocence ! O blushing dawn ! You're Lyda to  
the letter !

MENALCAS.

O lamplight, with the curtains drawn ! You suit  
Euneica better !

DAPHNIS.

See, Lyda comes, whose gentle head light fall my  
flowers of verse on.

MENALCAS.

Hark to Euneica's high-heeled tread—

AMBO.

Great Pan ! they're both one person.

## THE LAST PULL.

THE butterflies all have departed who settled awhile  
on these shores ;

The shopmen all day, dismal-hearted, stand aproned  
and capped at their doors ;

The business trains, which were about full a month  
or two back, start for town

Half-empty ; and Deuceace is doubtful of a rubber  
to smooth the way down.

“Take her out, sir ?” No, wait a bit, Johnny.  
Nor weather nor water are clear ;

But the barmaids at Lockleigh are bonnie—I mean,  
they draw excellent beer.

The scenes of much innocent pastime—not innocent  
always ? Ah, well,

I'll just paddle o'er for the last time before you  
swathe up the Bluebell.

There's something that's friendly and homelike  
about the familiar stream,  
Though most men to ramble and roam like—one  
sickens of smoke and of steam,  
Of restaurant grills, and the grizzled old saints up  
the gallery stairs,  
And the knee-bones of martyrs that frizzled for new  
fangled action at prayers.

I've been borne upon streams celebrated in history,  
story, and song—  
Up the Rhine, where abodes castellated and ruins  
and vineyards belong ;  
Down the Danube, where good sportsmen reign,  
where each château has sport that is new ;  
Past Meudon's coy wood on the Seine, where "les  
canotiers sont bien vus."

Add the Tigris, the Tiber, the Rhone, the great  
streams rolling floods to the seas ;

The Thames is an Englishman's own—the best proof  
it's superior to these.

'Tis the boating man's river. Are flooded in winter  
the lawns on its bank,  
And its shore most consumedly mudded? Such  
things among trifles we rank.

A charm hath the Thames in October, when autumn-  
tints vary the scene,  
Nor needs one *æs triplex* nor *robur* to adventure its  
waters, I ween,  
In a skiff of old Messenger's building, clean, shapely,  
and true in her lines,  
Undefaced by the gingerbread gilding whereto  
modern splendour inclines.

For last midsummer's music and madness the dull  
day seems to sombrely grieve;  
But for me not an echo of sadness that season's soft  
symphonies leave,

As I swing past the bend that was witness of spots  
where we tea'd and we tear'd,  
One selecting for love-vows with fitness where the  
sound of our voices was weir'd.

Here's the place of our picnic; the cherry-pie,  
sprinkled with pepper, was nice;  
With excellent forethought, the sherry had poured  
itself over the ice.  
At luncheon, by signs without words, I described  
her a tall leafy screen,  
Where a man with a pipe had a bird's-eye view round,  
and *two* couldn't be seen.

Here's the battle-ground of the regatta, where once  
they assigned me a part—  
No spectator's. I, staked and bound, sat, a fixed  
form, in a boat like a dart.  
'Mid yonder old piles lurked the barbel, each even-  
ing expected to bite;

But *did* they? For fishermen garble the record so  
sadly at night.

Flirtation, athletics, and languorous sport, and long  
draughts at the Crown,

Farewell! I'm away to the clangour and clients that  
wait me in town.

When closing time comes, and when anchored the  
ship is, and shut the hotel,

The last pull at the sculls, or the tankard, has sweet-  
ness that's sorrow as well.



A PRESENT DAY PYRRHA.

“ Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa.”

THERE'S the cottage, pranked by posies,  
And by perfumed breezes fanned;  
There's the chatelaine, blush-red roses  
Gathered in each white-rose hand;  
There's the river bordering hard on  
Shrubberied limits of the garden:—  
There a youth, as daylight closes,  
Comes upon the lawn to land.

She's so *chic*, and yet so simple—  
Cotton frock and golden hair.  
Lurking loves in every dimple  
Laugh to see men seek her lair.  
Who could spy, though prescience-gifted—  
Though the future's veil were lifted—

'Neath that neat coquettish wimple,  
Half the mischief hidden there?

Who'd o'er ocean's blue expanses,  
Knowing them deceitful, sail?  
Who'd believe a bright eye's glances  
Thinking aught so fair could fail?  
As the sailor, so the lover  
Finds there's nothing to recover,  
Risked his all on woman's fancies,  
Fickler far than any gale.

See, lads, on the shelf collected  
Gloves and flowers and billets-doux,  
Salvage with a past connected  
When I set my sails like you!  
There I keep them to remind me,  
Should a passing passion find me  
By youth's fever still affected,  
Of the danger I've been through.

LAST WORDS.



## TWO BOOKS.

BRIGHT as the crimson glow when love  
First sends a missive to a maiden,  
Keen as the miser's glance above  
A bag with golden moneys laden,  
So bright upon the author's cheek,  
So keen beneath the author's brow,  
The glow and glance that plainly speak  
His book in print has reached him now.

His book—his first-born—(who does not  
Some little paper thing remember  
That formed a young life's beauty spot  
From January to December?).  
How tenderly he turns the leaves  
That have for him a nameless charm,

And reads from them on summer eves  
To some one hanging on his arm !

How Nature seems to share his joy !  
How every breeze to whisper presage  
Of future fame to glad the boy,  
As boy-like he receives the message !  
Mind like a fountain overflows  
With wisdom, fancy, wealth of thought,  
Ere yet the world with all its woes  
The lesson of his life has taught.

\* \* \* \*

The lesson of his life he's learned ;  
Well-worn is now that writing table ;  
The visions of his youth have turned  
(As visions will) into a fable.  
He's very old. His head is white,  
His hand is weary, heart is sore.  
He's very old. Yet must he write ;  
The printer's devil's at the door.

He thinks this book must be his last ;—

'T will pay his funeral expenses ;—

His energy for work is past,

A numbness stiffens all his senses.

When suddenly all pain has gone !

At sight of some few flowers of spring  
A kindly hand has laid upon

His table—they such memories bring.

He writes. A flower of faded breath

Falls where the last uncertain line is  
And lo ! it is the pen of Death

That on the page has written “Finis.”  
The lamp is out. Poor slave, farewell !

You and your work have had their day.  
No published line your end shall tell ;—  
That printer's boy can go his way.!

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